Reading infrastructures in the contemporary city: A study of three public libraries in Sydney

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Statement of authentication

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original except as acknowledged in the text. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material, either in full or in part, for a degree at this or any other institution.

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(Signature)
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Abstract

This research examines the library as one node within a city’s governmental and reading infrastructures; a visible part of the local municipal authority as well as a site that promotes reading and literacy. In this research, the library is understood as a dispositif, an arrangement of multiple devices that influence behaviours around reading and public conduct. Liberal governmentality, as theorised by scholars such as Foucault, Joyce, Rose and Otter, is used to explore the way the library and librarians manage a free public and encourage desirable behaviours related to reading, learning and sociality. Bourdieus’s concepts of cultural capital and habitus are used to examine the reading tastes and lives of a diverse group of library users. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with librarians and library users. Additional analysis of reports, profiles and guidelines as devices in the construction of the library and librarianship was undertaken. The librarians, documents, policies and spaces of the library were seen as components of the library dispositif, each of which held a different role in the creation of the library as a municipal institution embedded within broader reading networks. The research focused on three libraries located in socio-economically and demographically diverse regions in Sydney: Whitlam Library is situated in Cabramatta, an area with a low socio-economic profile and a high migrant population, Narellan Library is in a rapidly growing outer suburban area, and Lane Cove Library is in an area with a well-educated and relatively wealthy population. The examination of these three libraries reveals the ways in which different libraries organise, manage and order their collection, and design and arrange interior spaces. This research is about the influences that bear upon public libraries, shaping collections and spaces: professional organisations, legislation, council authorities, and other private actors such as book retailers and library supply companies. It is also about how public libraries function as spaces that organise reading and readers, catering to different types, tastes and reasons for reading.

Keywords: public libraries, Sydney, Australia, dispositif, liberal governmentality, cultural capital, reading
Introduction

When this war came upon us, it seemed possible for a time that our building operations would have to be suspended. Fortunately for Australia it was decided to carry on despite the war. This was a wise statesmanlike decision. Indeed, it symbolised a fundamental issue of the war itself. Hitler had destroyed books. We went on building so that the books should remain our eternal heritage. Our State thus showed its special faith in the very freedom which our enemies openly suppressed.

Great public libraries are essential to freedom and to free men. They must always be free. Free to collect, to house, to make available to all, books by men and women of every shade of opinion. And so, there is no religion, no philosophy, no political system, no science, no useful art, no profession, no mechanism of production or distribution, no proposal for social-wellbeing, which cannot be freely studied in this public library. Is it not this indeed one of the rights for the preservation of which the war is being fought?

— H.V. Evatt, President of the Public Library of New South Wales, Board of Trustees, from the official opening of the Mitchell Wing of the library, 24 November, 1943

Evatt’s comments highlight certain principles and features of public libraries that were evident in 1943 and remain so now—they are mechanisms of the state, concerned with the collection and provision of a wide range of books, and their users are free to pursue their own interests and vocations. In this research, I investigate the current state of municipal public libraries in Australia, with a focus on several branch libraries operating within the NSW library network. By ‘municipal public library’, I refer to the public libraries that are part of local councils, as opposed to state research libraries or quasi-public libraries (such as university libraries). These libraries are

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1 The Public Library of New South Wales is now the State Library of New South Wales, and the Mitchell Wing is now known as the Mitchell Library Reading Room.

2 Additionally, at the opening of the Mitchell Wing of the Public Library of New South Wales, New South Wales Premier, William McKell, announced the financial provisions for the Library Act 1939 (NSW) (Tink, 2014). Significantly, this is the legislation by which municipal libraries are governed.

3 In the remainder of this thesis, I refer to these municipal libraries as ‘public libraries’. This is the term most commonly used in the field of librarianship to refer to this type of library, although I do recognise that research libraries such as the State Library of NSW and the National Library of Australia are also publicly funded and open to the public.
publicly funded, serve the general public, and are governed under the *Library Act 1939* (NSW) and the *Local Government Act 1993* (NSW). The public library is understood as a method of social governance through which various forms of authority are exercised—the municipal authority of the state, authority of the librarians over the services and products provided, and the authority of the designers and architects who envisioned the library spaces and buildings. These authorities converge in the public library and promote certain ideals of literacy, education, and community.

Research and literature on public libraries abound and it is within this broad and multidisciplinary work that this thesis is situated. In geography and urban studies, public libraries are examined as public and civic spaces (Lees, 1997; Newman, 2007; Fincher and Iveson, 2008), or can be considered examples of urban commons (Amin, 2008) or what Koch and Latham (2013) term domesticated public spaces. In social history, public libraries are seen as state apparatuses and instruments of liberal governmentality, produced and shaped by particular social contexts and ideologies (Joyce, 2003; Otter, 2008). Fundamentally, libraries are also spaces of books and reading—of importance to writers (Manguel, 2006), sociologists (Rose, 1999), literary studies scholars (Kelly, 2012, 2014), photographers (Dawson, 2014), and architecture and planning scholars (Pevsner, 1976; Worpole, 2013). And, not least, there are specific disciplines of research dedicated to public libraries, including library history and library and information science (LIS).

This research contributes to the bodies of literature of urban and social geography as well as to the literature on municipal governance in cities. It uses the library as an example to examine how ideas of community and public space are understood and planned for and how public reading is provided for at an everyday level. Furthermore, this work bridges the academic disciplines of geography, cultural research and social history with the professional discipline of library and information science. It provides a concrete example to explore academic ideas while simultaneously offering a theoretical exploration of what happens in public libraries.

The work on public libraries and the link between media and space by Shannon Mattern has been particularly influential. Mattern’s (2007a) book *The New Downtown Library* examines the multiple uses of space within public libraries, and the processes through which new libraries are built in the United States (US). In a recent essay, she argues that public libraries are social, technological-intellectual, and cultural infrastructures (Mattern, 2014a). She articulates a vision of
libraries that are pervasive and networked, creating ‘what Bourdieu would call ‘structuring structures’” (Mattern, 2014a, p.6). In urban areas, libraries are not simply singular platforms of resources; they are part of an interconnected network of services serving a city. They exist within a city’s wider network of cultural, social and intellectual institutions. Importantly, they can function as such because there are systems in place to scaffold the library: mundane and behind-the-scenes processes that facilitate their role as part of the city’s infrastructure. Even libraries in rural or regional areas are embedded within larger informational infrastructures.

Mattern has shone the spotlight on infrastructure and networks that enable libraries to perform their function as a source of knowledge and informational material (Mattern, 2015). In interrogating the logistics of the New York and Brooklyn Public Library systems, she makes visible the typically unseen networks underpinning library systems such as technical service centres, delivery vans, and book sorting:

‘Library systems’ typically call to mind a public, architectural geography composed of central libraries and branches. Rarely do we give thought to the networks linking these individual nodes, let alone the über-system that extends far beyond the libraries’ built environments, catalogs, and databases. But these networks are crucial: the wealth of our libraries’ resources and services could never be contained within their walls. (Mattern, 2015, para.4)

Before I continue with the thread of the library as part of a wider network of infrastructure, I first offer a brief note on the terms ‘infrastructure’ and ‘public’. Frischmann explains infrastructure as the ‘underlying framework of a system’ or the ‘underlying foundation’ of a system (Frischmann, 2012). This includes traditional infrastructure such as transport and communication systems as well as non-traditional forms such as environmental and intellectual infrastructure. But all infrastructures have three general features: the government plays a significant role in their provision, they tend to be openly accessible, and they ‘generate significant spillovers … that result in large social gains’ (Frischmann, 2012, p.5). This relates well to the

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4 Bourdieu defines *habitus* as ‘systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations’ (Bourdieu, 1990, p.53). These concepts are discussed more in chapter seven.
institution of the public library: openly accessible and provided by the state. Especially pertinent to public libraries is his description of cultural-intellectual infrastructure:

Intellectual infrastructure, such as basic research, ideas, general purpose technologies, and languages, creates benefits for society primarily by facilitating a wide range of downstream productive activities, including information production, innovation, and the development of products and services, as well as education, community building and interaction, democratic participation, socialization, and many other socially valuable activities. (Frischmann, 2012, p.253)

Importantly, infrastructure is also often complex and invisible. In an essay titled ‘Infrastructural Tourism’, Mattern describes the complexity and invisibility of the infrastructures that make cities possible such as communication, transport, food, traffic, and waste (Mattern, 2013). She recounts various understandings of the term from numerous disciplines, noting that the term has come to encompass far more than asphalt highways and railway tracks and can also include intellectual and institutional structures; ‘non-things’ as well as things. She argues that examining these often invisible infrastructures and networks can result in tangible outcomes and meaningful actions.

The invisibility of infrastructure is stressed by Star as she ‘surfaces the invisible’ (1999). Star suggests that infrastructure has the following properties: embeddedness, transparency, reach or scope (beyond a single event or site), learned as part of membership, linked with conventions of practice, embodies standards, is built on an installed base, is fixed in modular increments, and becomes visible upon breakdown (Star, 1999, pp.381–382). This last point is highlighted by Graham and Thrift in their examination of repair and maintenance practices. They argue, ‘Repair and maintenance are not incidental activities … they form a minimal discourse of commands, dates, addresses, manuals, storage and feedback which whispers the world into existence’ (Graham and Thrift, 2007, pp.19–20).

In this thesis, these two aspects of infrastructure—as large networks undergirding a city that are also largely invisible—are particularly pertinent. Public libraries exist within networks of government institutions including local councils and public education systems; they also occupy a position in a nation’s reading industry alongside authors, publishers, booksellers, and other actors in literary culture. Furthermore, many of their processes can be invisible to the end user such as collection development and spatial design. This research examines the library as one node in the
city’s wider reading and municipal infrastructure as well as foregrounding the often-invisible processes that are fundamental to their creation and ongoing existence.

Another important term addressed in this thesis is ‘public’. The concept of ‘public’ in modern usage is generally positioned as the opposite to ‘private’. Calhoun explains that ‘public’ can refer to:

(a) the people, interests, or activities which are structured by or pertain to a state; (b) anything which is open or accessible; (c) that which is shared, especially that which must be shared; (d) all that is outside the household; and (e) knowledge or opinion that is formed or circulated in communicative exchange, especially through oratory, texts, or other impersonal media. (Calhoun, 2005, p.282)

‘Public’, Calhoun suggests, can mean any combination of those possibilities. In relation to public libraries, there are several key points. First, they are structured by and pertain to the state. Australian libraries are governed by state legislation and operate as part of the local municipality. Second, the library’s identity and purpose is closely linked with the circulation of ideas and knowledge. And third, libraries are open and accessible spaces—public spaces. These spaces ‘make possible interaction that is not based on intimacy, but instead connects strangers’ (Calhoun, 2005, p.283). This is similar to Iveson’s characterisation of topographical public space: ‘particular places in the city that are (or should be) open to members of ‘the public’ (Iveson, 2007, p.4). Lees (1997, 1998), in writing about Vancouver Public Library, suggests that the planning and creation of such public spaces are closely linked with municipal control. She is careful to note that public space has never been entirely free and open; there has always been an element of control and surveillance (see chapter four).

An important point of this research is that the libraries I study are relatively small, suburban branches, and these act as everyday public places that exist as part of the city’s social and cultural infrastructure. Much of Mattern’s writing on public libraries looks at exceptional buildings, those incorporating novel features such as collaborative spaces for content creation,

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5 Iveson makes a distinction between topographical public spaces and procedural public spaces. Procedural approaches, explain Iveson, perceive public space as ‘any space which is put to use at a given time for collective action and debate’ (Iveson, 2007, p.3). The term ‘public space’ can refer to both topographical and procedural public spaces.
pop-up libraries and learning hubs for online courses. Her 2014 article highlights ways in which grand and innovative libraries become social and technological-intellectual infrastructure, complete with rich photographs that illustrate their scale. Similarly, her 2007 book focuses on large, newly-constructed central libraries.

These conversations around large, inner city, exceptional libraries are important in envisioning future possibilities, but there are many more public libraries for which operations and spaces are more humble. These smaller branches are typically not creating spaces of co-production or providing technologies such as 3D printers and photography drones, although there can still be innovative practices and there is an emerging push for establishing creative spaces in public libraries (Boyle et al., 2016). Rather, for most libraries, issues emerge on more mundane matters—things such as book suppliers and library furniture. Public libraries are important pieces of social, cultural and intellectual infrastructure, as Mattern contends, but they do not necessarily need to be at the forefront of technological and spatial innovation to be so.

Gibson et al. (2012) examine cultural assets and spaces in Wollongong, a regional city in Australia, through cultural asset mapping. Research participants were asked to draw what they imagined to be ‘cool’ Wollongong and ‘creative’ Wollongong, and the results revealed not only a concentration in the city centre but also a distinctly suburban geography, with examples of everyday vernacular creativity such as community gardens and writers’ groups that were found across the city. I suggest that libraries might be considered part of this vernacular cultural infrastructure, found not only in city centres but also in the suburban fabric of a city. They are part of a city’s social, cultural and intellectual infrastructure simply by being ordinary spaces for studying, borrowing, and reading books. This way of understanding libraries as infrastructure is how I conceive of the object of analysis in this thesis, and in the following section, I elaborate the theoretical approach adopted.

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6 In 2014, Seattle Public Library in the US launched ‘Open Air’, an outdoor pop-up library that uses especially designed outdoor library furniture to create temporary reading rooms in various locations around the city (Seattle Public Library, 2014, 2015). In Sydney, Camden Council launched ‘Books Unbound’, a pop-up virtual library where library employees with laptops and iPads were present at various community events to promote the library’s electronic resources (Armstrong, 2014).
Theoretical framework

The library as a site of liberal governmentality

In examining the library as part of a city’s reading infrastructure, multiple theoretical perspectives are used. The first theoretical lens used in this thesis—drawn from studies of library history, architectural history, and social history—informs the discussion on the present state of public libraries in Sydney and Australia. The modern public library is considered a visible arm of the municipal authority\(^7\), an apparatus that plays a role in influencing the behaviour and attitudes of the populace. The public library emerged as an instrument for liberal governmentality in the nineteenth century in the UK, Europe, and the US. While this attitude is perhaps no longer as overt in contemporary Sydney, the public library is still a civic and governmental body, and this is evident in the way library collections and spaces are produced.

Governmentality concerns the art of government and the wellbeing of the population overall. Foucault argues that this form of government is enacted through institutions, procedures, various calculations and tactics which result in the formation of a series of governmental apparatuses (Foucault, 1991; Li, 2007). The overarching framework guiding this thesis is the notion of the public library comprising a dispositif, a collection of discourses and instruments that govern and regulate. The various strategies and tactics used within the library to encourage particular behaviours or promote certain ideals are explored.

In *The Rule of Freedom* (2003), Joyce applies Foucault’s insights specifically to the emergence of municipal councils, and elaborates on a version of liberalism that emerged in the nineteenth century that had a greater focus on the individual subject. Technologies developed in the nineteenth century such as street lighting allowed certain kinds of individual freedom, enabling people to be responsible and self-monitoring. Liberal governmentality, as theorised by Joyce, is not only about creating an auto-regulating city but also about identifying and fostering individuals who can self-govern, which he terms ruling at a distance (2003, p.100)\(^8\).

\(^7\) During my first meeting with Librarian E, she remarked that the local council loves the library because it is a ‘good news’ story. She commented that the council often has negative associations in the minds of residents and the local news media due to things such as rates and taxes, and the library is an element of the council that is visible and popular.

\(^8\) In his 1978/9 lecture series, Foucault traced the genealogy of governmentality and began to focus on the liberal art of government, analysing the idea of neo-liberal governmentality (Foucault, 1978; Lemke, 2001)
The municipal library in the nineteenth century came to be a site of liberal
governmentality that encouraged a self-governing individual in multiple ways: as an advocate for
and enabler of the transparency of knowledge; as a representation of the local and the wider
community; and as a physical location within the city that acted as a marker of civic identity and
proper behaviour (Joyce, 1999, 2003). The knowledge in the library was ordering and civilising, a
tool for instruction (Rose, 1999). Additionally, liberal governmentality in the library building was
evident not only in the place of the library within the city, but also in the space of the library
itself and the role it had in regulating the behaviour of the individual (see, for example, Black,
2005). The library was a technology implemented by municipal authorities that aspired to
universal knowledge which was, in liberalism, intertwined with human progress. This was
achieved through the storage and provision of knowledge, as well as through the organisation of
physical space.

By contrast, Rose (1999) writes about powers of freedom and government through
community in the post-war era, and offers a different way of understanding community. Rose
argues that government is a myriad of micro-locales. He suggests that the government of
freedom is closely linked to spaces and gazes, and space and topography can be used to influence
conduct. Furthermore, there is a new method of government: through community (Rose, 1996a).
The building of responsible communities was a governmental strategy for social justice and the
regeneration of society; that is, community-building was a way to manage the welfare of the
population and strengthen the state. The public library is one of the spaces and technologies for
government through community.

This understanding of the public library as a cog in the municipality and the state
continues throughout this thesis. Public libraries in Australia form part of local councils, the local
government arm of the state9. By ‘state’, I refer to the three levels of government in Australia:
federal, state, local. While each has its different foci and areas of responsibility, they share
common goals in relation to libraries—education, culture, literacy and the preservation of
knowledge—albeit to various extents. These libraries, through their spaces, collections, and

---

9 Local councils in Australia pre-date the founding of Australia as a Federation in 1901, with the first local
government established in 1840 in Adelaide. By the end of the nineteenth century, local councils were an established
part of the Australian governance landscape (Kelly, 2011; Megarrity, 2011). Libraries and Schools of Arts fell under
the remit of these local authorities and some library systems in Sydney, including ones examined in this research,
predate the declaration of Australia as a Federation.
services promote certain behaviours perceived as beneficial to the populace such as reading, education, and sociality.

The library as reading space and cultural infrastructure

The second theoretical lens in this thesis focuses on reading, taste, and culture. Professional library and information science literature tends to focus on the pragmatics of collection and library organisation, such as how library users find books in the library and how books ought to be shelved. However, reading also receives attention in fields such literary and cultural studies, and there is literature on reading as a cultural activity, the history of reading, and the way reading is changing with the advent of new digital technologies—not only with new formats such as e-books, but also with new ways of learning about and participating in reading through social media and mass reading events. I examine the library as a physical site with processes and physical infrastructure built into its operations and identity that facilitates reading. In contemporary society, multiple agents act together as infrastructure for reading such as authors, publishers, bookshops, and media programs (Collins, 2010). The public library is one node in this broader reading infrastructure, and a physical space in which discussions about reading, publishing, and books take on a material form. This also ties back to the idea of the library as a governmental dispositif: how is the act of reading valued, and are particular kinds of reading more valued than others?

Cultural capital is used as a frame for discussing the reading habits and tastes of the library user participants. Scholars from areas such as English and literature studies, media and communication studies, and LIS draw on Bourdieu’s (1984) concept of cultural capital and use it in developing new understandings of contemporary reading practices. Collins (2010) and Fuller and Rehberg Sedo (2013) both explore reading practices in contemporary society, and examine the impact of mass reading events on reading as a social practice and the popularisation of literary culture. More specifically related to taste and cultural capital, Gelder's (2004) work on

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10 By ‘reading infrastructure’, I also refer here to book culture, reading culture, and book industry. Each of these terms, coined by various scholars, have subtle differences in meaning but primarily refer to the players, institutions and processes that make up a city or country’s reading and book milieu.
popular fiction highlights hierarchies within the activity and the values associated with different reading materials.

In Australia, reading is often valued more highly than other cultural activities (Bennett et al., 1999) but there are clear hierarchies within reading itself related to the kinds of material read. Material such as poetry, canonised literary texts, and contemporary literary novels are conventionally elevated above popular fiction and genres such as romance and thrillers. In this thesis, I suggest that librarians are in a position of authority with the ability to shape—to a degree—reading habits and tastes. They exercise power in deciding which books and titles to promote and stock. However, there can be a tension between the educational role of the library in terms of promoting literacy and ‘good’ reading and its role in providing library users with leisure and entertainment—often a less valued kind of reading, but encouraging the act of reading nonetheless.

I examine ideas around reading as a valued activity, the ‘worthiness’ of various types of reading material, and cultural capital from two different angles. In chapter five, I look at the development of the library collection, and the rationale behind librarians’ decisions regarding which books are placed on library shelves (both physical and digital). The library here is seen as an instrument of governance through the promotion of both reading itself and particular kinds of reading. I also look at these ideas from the view of the reader, and examine the reading habits of library users in chapter seven.

Furthermore, although the discussion here focuses on the library as a governmental dispositif, there are other forces at play on the subject of reading tastes and patterns of library use. Bourdieu’s theories of cultural capital and habitus illustrate how library users sort themselves into different groups and cultural competencies. The library develops its collection and book displays in accordance with certain rationales and principles but the library user’s choice in reading material is also affected by his or her education, social class, and upbringing. Cultural capital is used in this thesis as a theoretical tool to understand reading choices in more fine-grained detail within the more general framework of the library as a dispositif.

The library as community space and social infrastructure

The third element of this research examines how ‘community’ is used as a recurrent discourse which informs library practice in NSW and my field sites. In recent times, the library is often perceived and created as an urban ‘living room’ (Commission for Architecture and the Built
Environment, 2003; Fincher and Iveson, 2008; State Library of New South Wales, 2012). In designing public library spaces, there is an emphasis on creating comfortable and welcoming spaces for extended visits, with different spaces to accommodate various activities. Related to this, there is considerable research in LIS that evaluates the public library as a site for the generation of social capital (see, for example, Goulding, 2004; Hussey, 2010; Johnson, 2012; Svendsen, 2013). This understanding of the library as a site of social capital and conviviality becomes the object of analysis. The library is often conceived of as a public, democratic, open space where social capital is generated and can act as a ‘third place’ (Oldenburg, 1989).

The discourses of social capital and ‘third place’ as they are applied to libraries are critically analysed in this thesis. I examine the way these terms are used by councils and libraries, and how ‘community’ becomes a conduit through which governmental action takes place. The creation of these spaces constitutes yet another governmental form, where particular technologies allow individuals freedom of movement and association (Joyce, 2003). The establishment of these community spaces is often an explicit goal of municipal authorities.

The library is not only important as a vessel of knowledge and media; value is also inherent in the space itself. And the ‘free’ nature of the space affects expectations of behaviour and use: who can use it, for how long, and for what purposes. Whether a space is public or private can raise questions around the idea of ownership and contestation (see Lees, 1997, 1998), and in the case of the public library, it can have an impact on how users perceive and understand the space. Several library user participants interviewed spoke about their appreciation for having the community space where they could meet friends, be around strangers, and have a space that belonged to them. The free and publicly-owned nature of the public library, acted on by commercial forces, places the library in a unique position.

**Research design**

Public libraries in Australia sit within a hierarchy, with a national library at the top, state libraries below that, and local libraries positioned underneath. At the national level, the National Library of Australia acts as a cultural and intellectual repository, collecting works of relevance to Australian culture and identity, and is primarily a research library. In relation to local municipal libraries, it manages Libraries Australia, a resource sharing service that includes the Australian National Bibliographic Database, from which the majority of library catalogue entries are drawn. In NSW, the State Library—in common with its counterparts in other States—acts as a research
library as well as enacting some governance roles such as gathering statistics and offering consultancy and guidance to public libraries. Finally, there are public municipal libraries that are part of local government responsibilities. These are the libraries of interest in this research.

To investigate the current state of municipal libraries in NSW and how they produce infrastructures for reading, my research focuses on three municipal libraries. They were chosen for their socio-economic diversity, which together offered the opportunity to consider how these issues were negotiated in differing contexts by both librarians and readers. Sixteen semi-structured interviews were conducted with librarians and thirty with library users. The librarians interviewed exercised authority in the development of library spaces, collections, and programs and were thus well positioned to speak on the issues of interest in this research. The library user respondents were interviewed to answer questions the librarians themselves could not easily answer: stories of how and why people used libraries.

Further information was provided by librarians in the form of documents such as collection development guidelines, library supplier profiles, and council reports. These were used to build a more detailed picture of these libraries and their operations, beyond what can be revealed in a semi-structured interview. At a more general level, the State Library of New South Wales publishes statistics and reports on public libraries in NSW which were helpful in providing background information on the professional context in which these libraries operate. These documents are also considered devices that contribute to the ordering and production of the library that contain within them a material power: they govern, advise, regulate, and detail the way collections are developed, spaces are designed, and the way libraries function more generally.

**Thesis outline**

I begin with a discussion of the historical and social contexts from which the modern public library developed. While the public library often portrays itself as a neutral space in popular and professional discourse, and indeed it strives to provide balanced perspectives on a range of subjects through its collection and events, the library both now and in the past, is produced by certain power relations.

In chapter one, I briefly outline the history of the library, focusing on the emergence of the modern public library in the nineteenth century and the shifts in power that occurred in that period. The modern public library saw a shift in control from the church, monarchy, and university towards the municipal authority. I discuss the developments of public libraries in the
UK, the US, and Australia in a view of understanding the library as a *dispositif*. In the second half of the chapter, I turn to the non-state forces and influences that act on the library, including the professionalisation of librarianship, the impact of the book publishing and retailing industries, and the effects of new digital technologies. Although public libraries in Australia are part of local governments, the state is not the only force that contributes to the production of library collections, spaces and programs.

In chapter two, my attention turns to the methods of the research: semi-structured interviews with librarians and library users at three case study libraries in Sydney, supplemented by photographs of library spaces and secondary data such as library reports and publications. A key aim of this chapter is to draw out and comment on some concerns with doing qualitative research including the power relations between the interviewer and the interviewee, the position of the librarian as an employee of the municipal authority, the self-selected sample of library user respondents, and the subjectivities of both the researcher and the research participants.

Chapter three provides a socio-spatial framework for understanding the differing characteristics of the chosen libraries and I elaborate on the way that the library *dispositif* is grounded within a spatial location which becomes part of metropolitan governance. The history and geography of Sydney as a city have affected migration patterns, employment trends, and the locations of various social classes and demographics. The socio-economic profiles of the areas in which the libraries are situated have a profound effect on the collections and resources they provide, and it is important to understand the library in its geographical context.

The remaining four chapters of the thesis use the data collected in this research to examine the multiple layers of the library, exploring the ways library spaces and collections are produced and consumed. In chapter four, I look at the issue of order and ordering in the library as I elaborate more fully on the idea of the library as a *dispositif* and a site of interior design and hidden systems of organisation. I discuss the ordering of each of various components: how the arrangement of furniture and space guides the way people move and behave; how the ordering of books and use of classificatory systems influences the way people browse and discover; and how the positioning of different types of spaces within the library follow a particular logic. The library is a heterogeneous space that accommodates a variety of uses and users, and the ‘libraries within the library’ make possible silent studying and research as well as loud children’s storytime events and quiet conversation. These uses all have different space, sound and security needs.

Chapter five looks at how the library shapes reading and explores the library collection as an instrument of governmentality for self-improvement and learning. I examine the rationale of
librarians’ decisions behind the titles purchased for the collections and outline the processes that occur behind the scenes to place books on shelves. The popular fiction versus literary fiction tension is explored, with a look at the romance genre as a way to examine ideas of power and regulation inherent in discussions of popular fiction in libraries. I suggest that although libraries purport to be open and accessible places for everyone, there are value judgments inherent in library collections and the ways certain books are catalogued and shelved. The position of the library at the intersection of municipal and commercial space is also discussed. Here, I examine the arrangement of books and the influences from book retailing on library displays, as well as the various market factors that influence the development of library collections.

The focus of chapter six is the library’s role within the community dispositif, a strategy and site used by the local governing authority for the development of community. Local councils in NSW and public library discourse more generally often promote the library as a space where community is developed, and in this chapter I analyse these contemporary uses of ‘community’ through the lens of the liberal community and governmentality, drawing on the works of Nikolas Rose and Patrick Joyce. The liberal community is seen as a way of influencing the population, involving an array of technologies, and the space and services provided by the library is a key part of this governing task. This chapter interrogates how the Australian library (both historically and now) becomes a technology of government through its function as a community space. Community is a concept that is a manufactured part of the council strategy for library management, and I look at how this is achieved and communicated by the council authority.

In chapter seven, the library is seen as a site for the inculcation of reading, located at the intersection of governmental and commercial actors who promote and encourage reading in various forms. I look at how libraries encourage reading amongst a diverse user group with different reading needs. Library users speak different languages, are at different stages of their lives, and possess different amounts of literary cultural capital. Bourdieu’s theory of cultural capital is used to analyse how library users and readers sort themselves into different groups with varying levels of cultural competency and how these affect their reading habits.

In the conclusion of the thesis, I bring together the different strands of the argument put forth in this thesis and suggest some avenues for further research. I look at various elements of the library dispositif and how they may be affected by developments in the reading industry and with municipal reform occurring in NSW, and consider how the framework of the library as a dispositif could be used in future research on public libraries.
This thesis probes accounts of the public library's history and its operations in the context of current social and cultural relations. At the heart of this thesis is the argument that the public library is an institution where multiple forces converge, which in turn shapes and affects people and communities in various ways. The library is positioned at the intersection of municipal and market forces: it is a space for the promotion of reading and literacy, linked to governmental ideals of learning and education, and it is also a space that is influenced by publishers, book retailers, and visual merchandising trends. These governmental and commercial actors and their goals come together in the public library.
Chapter 1
Making public libraries

Introduction

In Australia, public libraries operate as part of municipal councils, funded and operated by local governments. These libraries are more informal and quotidian than their state and federal counterparts, and become sites of both leisure and education through their spaces and collections. They incorporate multiple spaces, have collections spanning a wide range of subjects and genres, and cater for diverse groups of users.

The public library is positioned at the intersection of municipal and commercial forces, and this research is an exploration of these tensions and influences. On the one hand, the public library is one way the municipal authority makes it itself visible to its populace and encourages ideals and behaviours endorsed or promoted by the state. However, the state is not the only force acting on public libraries—they are also influenced by the commercial library market, book publishing and retailing industries, visual merchandising trends in the retail industry, and the new forms of knowledge dissemination facilitated by digital technologies. Public libraries are shaped by these various forces, and although their position within local government has remained relatively consistent since the nineteenth century, how they operate and what they look like is constantly in flux.

My purpose in this chapter is to provide a historical and theoretical scaffold upon which the remainder of the thesis will be erected. I begin exploring this topic with a discussion of different types of power that have been evident in libraries throughout history, and arrive at a brief overview of liberal governmentality and the modern library. I then discuss the development of libraries in the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States (US) in view of their influence on the development of Australian libraries. Next, I outline the broader histories and discourses that

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11 Historically, governmentality concerned not only the state. Foucault’s work on the art of government traces the genealogy of governmentality, including the governmentalisation of the state (Foucault, 1991; Lemke, 2001). Governmentality was about the art of governing, how to govern oneself and others, and it was a problem that arose in the sixteenth century. Libraries were governmental before they became institutions tied to the state; the libraries of the churches, aristocracy, and academy also sought to govern.
have influenced the establishment, development, and current operation of public libraries both in New South Wales (NSW) and Australia more generally. In the final section of this chapter, I turn my attention to the specific forces that now shape Australian libraries including professionalisation, educational structures, publishing, and new digital technologies.

1.1 Power and the modern liberal library

1.1.1 A brief history of early libraries

The earliest libraries were discovered in ancient Mesopotamia, dating back to the sixth century BC, with libraries later emerging in ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome. These were typically collections of tablets or scrolls that recorded economic transactions (Battles, 2003; Campbell, 2013; Harris, 1995). Succeeding these ancient libraries were religious and monastic libraries, which were restrictive and demonstrated a priestly power. Harris (1995) notes that the late Roman era saw the decline of the ancient libraries alongside the beginnings of Christian libraries, which were established in the fourth century following the rapid expansion of Christianity. The monastic libraries that existed between about 600 and 1500 AD were largely collections of books that were kept across a monastery in various niches and carrels (Campbell, 2013).

Monastic libraries declined in the tenth and eleventh centuries, primarily because of war and political troubles (Harris, 1995). By the twelfth century, intellectual life had moved into cities, first in cathedrals and then universities (ibid.). Cathedral libraries were distinct from monastery libraries in that they were designed for educational reading, as opposed to inspirational reading, and held more secular texts. Universities were established in the thirteenth century, with the growth of towns, commerce, and secular learning (Pevsner, 1976). Although university libraries shared characteristics with cathedral and monastery libraries, in terms of the types of books held and how they were guarded, these were working libraries open to a larger audience, rather than repositories accessible only to a select few (Harris, 1995).

Libraries for educational and leisurely reading by the general public were established by the second half of the eighteenth century in the form of circulating and subscription libraries (Kelly, 1966). The developments of each of these various forms of library involved not simply
changes in collections and spaces, but also in the manifestations of power libraries sought to exercise\textsuperscript{12}.

Libraries in the fifteenth to seventeenth century England were a utilisation of power, first by the church and then by the king—from priestly power to princely power (Summit, 2008)\textsuperscript{13}. In her study of libraries in England during the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries, Jennifer Summit suggests that the development of libraries was a utilisation of power, first by the church and then by the king. Libraries at the beginning of this period were monastic libraries supported by the authority of the church. Libraries following the schism in Western Christianity in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (the Protestant Reformation), by contrast, were not simply about preserving history: ‘The books and written materials they contained were deliberately selected and in some cases literally remade in order to strengthen the king’s supremacy and to support the cause of religious reform’ (Summit, 2008, p.3). She suggests that the power wielded by libraries was not in the creation of objects, but rather in their selection and ordering of the objects—the ways they catalogued, shelved, and made books available to readers. This is true of early libraries where churches and kings held control, and remains true of modern public libraries that act as an instrument under a different kind of power—the local municipality.

1.1.2 Liberal governmentality and the public library

The modern public library is understood here not as a utilisation of priestly or princely power but as a liberal dispositif—an instrument of government that produces particular kinds of subjects. The liberal library is one mechanism through which the local municipal authority exercises influence over the population for the advancement of aims around education, literacy, and

\textsuperscript{12} The history of libraries is long, spanning over five thousand years, with different types of institutions and libraries, and constitutes a field of study on its own. I do not have space to delve into this history, though here I wish to acknowledge a few sources that were helpful in my understanding of the longer history of libraries and, in some indirect way, informing this research. Books I found particularly useful were Michael Harris’ ‘History of Libraries in the Western World’ (1995), Thomas Kelly’s ‘Early Public Libraries: A History of Public Libraries in Great Britain before 1850’ (1966), Nikolaus Pevsner’s ‘A History of Building Types’ (1976), James Campbell’s ‘The Library: A World History’, and Fred Lerner’s ‘The story of libraries: From the invention of writing to the computer age’ (2009).

\textsuperscript{13} Foucault understands pastoral power as specific to Christianity, and the pastor’s power is exercised through an individual’s self-examination and examination of others for faults and merits (Bennett, 2014). Pastoral power involves ‘conducting, directing, leading, guiding, taking in hand, and manipulating men … throughout their life and at every moment of their existence’ (Foucault, 2007, p.165). Sovereign power, by contrast, refers to power exercised by the king or ruler; a central form of authority that was enacted in accordance to the law (Singer and Weir, 2006; see also Foucault, 1975, 1991).
The public library that emerged in the UK and US in the nineteenth century achieved these goals in various ways, namely through the provision of an uplifting and educational library collection and program of events. The focus of this thesis is the contemporary public library, and my analysis of the library collections, spaces, and ordering practices is situated within a framework of liberal governmentality and the dispositif.

Foucault’s neologism ‘governmentality’ refers to, generally, the ‘conduct of conduct’, the techniques and methods of rule that aim to influence conduct to achieve particular objectives, of which the welfare and management of the population are central (Foucault, 1991; see also Li, 2007). This regulation of behaviour can and has taken multiple forms and is bound up in different knowledge and power relations, from the spectacle of the condemned on the scaffold as a ceremonial and public form of punishment to more discreet forms of punishment such as incarceration and the use of rules, timetables, and spatial arrangements to manage a populace (Foucault, 1975). Furthermore, governmentality involves ‘the ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses, and reflections, the calculations and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific albeit complex form of power’ (Foucault, 1991, p.102).

The shift towards the art of government from the structures of sovereignty also saw a greater importance of discipline. Foucault argues:

We need to see things not in terms of the replacement of sovereignty by a disciplinary society and the subsequent replacement of a disciplinary society by a society of government; in reality one has a triangle, sovereignty-discipline-government, which has as its primary target the population and as its essential mechanism the apparatuses of society. (Foucault, 1991, p.102)

Disciplinary power involves the various techniques used to compel people and bodies to behave in certain ways for certain outcomes (Foucault, 1975; see also Brenner, 2004; Huxley, 2006, 2008). In his account of disciplinary power, Foucault focuses on institutions such as the prison and asylum, but order can also be expressed in a different way. Bennett (1988) juxtaposes institutions of exhibition such as museums with Foucault’s more punishment-focused mechanisms, suggesting that these other types of institutions regulate behaviour through the self-watching and self-governing citizen. He argues that the act of opening up objects for exhibition orders both the items on display and the public inspecting the items. As such, new disciplinary
and surveillance mechanisms were introduced alongside the public museum in the nineteenth
century, signalling new power relations and methods of authority. Bennett suggests:

The institutions comprising 'the exhibitionary complex’ … were involved in the transfer
of objects and bodies from the enclosed and private domains in which they had
previously been displayed (but to a restricted public) into progressively more open and
public arenas where, through the representations to which they were subjected, they
formed vehicles for inscribing and broadcasting the messages of power (but of a
different type) throughout society. (Bennett, 1988, p.74)

The instruments through which government is performed take multiple forms, from
both state and non-state actors. Furthermore, they can involve not only material objects but
broader discursive, non-material elements such as legislation, policies, architectural theory, and
popular opinion (Huxley, 2008). The relations between these material and discursive objects are
what Foucault refers to as dispositifs:

A thoroughly heterogeneous assembly which involves discourses, institutions,
arbitrary structures, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific
enunciations, philosophical, moral, and philanthropic propositions; in short: as much the
said as the unsaid. (Foucault, 1980, p.194)

The dispositif is not simply these individual elements, but rather their arrangement. Brenner (1994) explains that the dispositif is a tool for analysing the complex relations between
discursive and material practices and their effects on society; they are systems of co-ordinated
functions that produce ways of ordering and regulation. The term has been variously translated
into English as ‘arrangement’, ‘mechanism’, and ‘apparatus’ (Huxley, 2008), though the terms are
not directly equivalent. Bussolini explains the difference in Foucault’s use of dispositif and appareil:
“Apparatus’ in Foucault seems to be a smaller subset of dispositif, and one that is more
specifically state-centered and instrumental [as opposed to] dispositive, which he has been at
pains to describe as more heterogeneous and more distributed’ (Bussolini, 2010, p.93). Dispositif,
then, can be understood as a more generalisable and varied assembly of apparatuses and the way
these different elements are arranged.
Furthermore, the dispositif is one tool within the broader concept of governmentality—while sovereign power also operated through dispositifs, my focus here is the dispositif within the framework of liberal governmentality. Governmentality was concerned with ‘how to govern oneself, how to be governed, how to govern others, by whom the people will accept being governed, how to become the best possible governor’ (Foucault, 1991, p.87). These concerns shifted towards a more liberal governmentality over the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Huxley, 2008), where governing occurred through individual liberty: ruling at a distance, but influencing free individuals such that they exercise their freedoms in appropriately civil ways as determined by the state (Burchell, 1996; Joyce, 2003; Gunn, 2006; Otter, 2002, 2004). Liberal governmentality was especially concerned with morality, social order, civility, and the creation of a self-regulating citizen who was both an object of and partner in government (Burchell, 1996; Osborne and Rose, 1999).

Rose discerns four features of liberal governmentality relevant to public libraries. First, there is a new relation between government and knowledge, wherein the accumulation and dissemination of information is used to exercise and improve governance. Second, there is the ‘specification of the subjects of rule as active in their own government’ (Rose, 1996b, p.45). Devices such as schools, asylums, and prisons (and libraries) ‘promise to create individuals who do not need to be governed by others but will govern themselves, master themselves, care for themselves’ (ibid.). Third, there is a relation to the authority of expertise. The state itself is kept at a distance, and authority is instead passed to autonomous expert authorities, and the ‘exercise of that autonomy is shaped through various forms of licensure, through professionalization and through bureaucratization’ (Rose, 1996b, p.46). Fourth, there is the ‘continual questioning of the activity of rule’, and the legitimacy of rule. Rose suggests that the validity of authority must be answered through technical means —of which democracy and expertise prove to be two rather durable solutions’ (Rose, 1996b, p.47).

The link between the functioning of the contemporary public library and these features of liberal governmentality is examined throughout this thesis. First, with regards to the relation between government and knowledge, this can be seen in the library in two ways. At a more literal level, public libraries collect and collate knowledge, not only of the kind that is stored and disseminated as books and other media, but of data collected on the library itself such as visitor
numbers, event attendance, and circulation. The activities of public libraries in NSW are documented by the State Library of NSW (SLNSW) and regularly reported\textsuperscript{14}, and the SLNSW actively engages in research on public library practice in NSW (see, for example, Forsyth et al., 2015). At a broader level, Foucault’s conception of the role of knowledge practices in producing strategies through which particular kinds of behaviour are governed is evident in the library. For example, the library can be perceived as a site through which knowledge focused on children’s literacy operates and where the habit of reading is inculcated. This relates to Rose’s second point: the development of subjects who are capable of self-governance. The public library was, and to an extent still is, conceived and perceived to be an institution of education, learning, and self-improvement.

Rose’s third and fourth points, on the authority of expertise, connect with the professionalisation of librarianship. Librarians are positioned as the expert authority within the library, legitimised through formal education and accredited qualifications. The legitimacy of rule and the technical means by which subjects are governed are seen both in the authority of the librarian as the expert professional and the other instruments that are part of the library dispositif such as legislation, formal policies, and codes of conduct. Though there may not be an outward questioning of the librarian’s authority, there is an expectation from the profession that their authority must be continually legitimised through strategies such as professional development and training. Various technologies and infrastructures are therefore necessary for the library to operate as an instrument of liberal governmentality.

Other characteristics of liberal governmentality are also of relevance to this discussion on the library, as set out by Otter:

First, its conspicuously visual character, and second, the massive mobilization of material resources required consciously to fashion cities into spaces within which civil conduct could be both secured and publicly displayed. (Otter, 2002, p.1)

He argues that the self-governing liberal subject was only made possible through the provision of visibility and infrastructure that facilitated visibility: ‘wide streets, slum demolition, \textsuperscript{14}Furthermore, this collection and dissemination of library data also occurs in public libraries elsewhere and reports are often generated on the use and state of public libraries. Recently, the Aspen Institute in the US released their report, \textit{Rising to the Challenge: Re-Envisioning Public Libraries} (Garmer, 2014).
sewerage and street lighting were all attempts to assemble spaces where ruling through freedom could be made possible and visible’ (Otter, 2002, p.3; see also Otter, 2008).

Otter suggests that technology was used to modify subjective perception in urban space negatively (to delimit sensory experience by curbing noise and smell) and positively (to stimulate the senses) (2004, p.42). ‘Positive’ technologies ‘freed the subject to enter into specific, productive relations with the city and its spaces, to improve body and mind through physical exercise and education’ (Otter, 2004, p.43). The library is one such positive technology. It allows the free subject the opportunity to learn, and indeed early public libraries in Britain in the nineteenth century were seen as educational spaces that allowed good citizens to help themselves (Black et al., 2009).

Liberal governmentality is necessarily spatial. Osborne and Rose assert that the city is a way of programming human behaviour and life in the name of government; it was ‘the milieu for the regulation of a carefully modulated freedom’ (1999, p.740; see also Huxley, 2008). This echoes Otter’s view that technologies created spaces where civility was visible and possible (Otter, 2008). The physical spaces of the city affect the way free subjects can be governed, such as by making them visible through sight lines and lighting, thereby using physical boundaries and material technologies to impose order and encourage ‘correct’ behaviour (Huxley, 2006).

Public libraries exemplify this spatial nature of liberal governmentality in two ways: the position of the public library itself in relation to the city, and the arrangement of spaces within the library to facilitate order and mutual surveillance. The library was grounded in the local; then, as now, there was an ‘idea that the library should be a representation of some sense of community’ (Joyce, 1999, p.40), with the collections and archives held by the library emphasising the local. This facet of the municipal library is evident not only in the library’s collection but is also expressed in the physicality of the building, including its placement within the city. Joyce explains that the municipal library was to be in the centre of town, hence the term ‘central library’15. These buildings were ‘shaped by the interests of civic leaders … designed to exemplify civic identity and proper civic behaviour’ (Joyce, 1999, p.44).

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15 Many contemporary public libraries are in central locations, close to transport networks and town centres. A librarian from Salisbury Public Library in the UK, when giving me a tour of the library and the town in May 2014, commented that the library’s location in the town centre was ‘prime real estate’. 

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Liberal governmentality is evident not only in the place of the library within the city, but also in the library’s internal space and the role it has in regulating the behaviour of individuals. The library was a technology aspiring to universal knowledge which was, in liberalism, intertwined with human progress. It sought to achieve this through the storage and provision of knowledge, and through the organisation of physical space. Space in the library was arranged to affect behaviour, a topic I return to in chapter four.

Public libraries in the western tradition emerged from nineteenth century ideals of morality, civility and a free but governable individual. These themes characterised the expansion of libraries in the UK and US. I concentrate on these two countries because they were particularly influential in the development of libraries in Australia. The McColvin Report (written by British librarian Lionel McColvin) and the Munn-Pitt Report (by American librarian Ralph Munn and Ernest Pitt, the Principal Librarian of the Library of Victoria) were two important documents that evaluated Australian libraries and offered suggestions for improvement. Early Australian libraries were partially shaped by these foreign voices. There are also parallels with library development in the UK in terms of what types of libraries preceded the public, municipal library, largely a result of Australia’s history as a British colony. I explore these histories in greater depth in the sections that follow.

1.2 Public libraries in the United Kingdom

The public library as it is now commonly understood—that is, funded by taxpayers, publicly owned, free at the point of use and open to all who wish to enter—does not appear in history until the nineteenth century. Yet the library as an instrument for self-improvement predated the public municipal library.

Miners’ libraries and mechanics’ institutes in Wales and Scotland flourished in the eighteenth century, as well as subscription libraries for the working classes (Kelly, 1966; Rose, 2010). These were voluntary societies, and Kelly (1966) reports that the first secular subscription library emerged amongst the miners of Scotland—the Leadhills Reading Society was founded in 1741, supported by contributions from local gentry and the miners themselves. Historian Jonathan Rose recounts that many coal regions boasted similar institutions, ‘many of them established by mine owners with the frank intention of making their workers sober, pious, and productive’ (2010, p.238). Such libraries allowed miners and workers to access culture and
intellectual life; the access to books and reading material revealed the transformative power of reading and culture.

An important development in UK library history was the passing of the Public Libraries Act in 1850. Although the Act did not compel governing municipal bodies to fund or develop public libraries, it allowed any municipal borough with a population greater than 10,000 to become a library authority and establish a library funded by taxpayer rates under certain conditions (Black, 2006; Harris, 1995). However, following the passing of this Act, growth in the number of libraries established was slow as enthusiasm waned. Altick reports that ‘in town after town, proposals to ‘adopt the acts’ were defeated, not only once but repeatedly, and by large margins’ (1957, p.227).

By contrast, the late nineteenth century was a significant era of public library growth in the UK. The period from the late 1800s to 1919 is a period of what Black and others term the ‘endowed public library’, where library expansion was driven by philanthropic gifts (Black et al., 2009; Black and Pepper, 2012). Alongside these, 1887 was the fiftieth anniversary of Queen Victoria’s reign, after which more local authorities adopted the Public Libraries Act in her honour.

Black et al. (2009) suggest that the public library was borne out of utilitarian tradition, a philosophical position that emphasised the notion of the ‘good citizen’ where the pursuit of knowledge and education was prioritised. Good citizens were shaped by their environments and by supporters of self-help. For example, William Ewart—the British politician seen as the library pioneer and instrumental in the passing of the 1850 Library Act (Harris, 1995)—saw libraries as ‘temples of knowledge’ for the advancement of self-education (Black et al, 2009, p.31).

This view of the library stems from a social and historical context where cultural institutions such as museums, galleries and libraries were thought to have a civilising effect on society. As Bennett put it, an idea emerged in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries that ‘frequent contact with art would result in more refined codes of personal conduct’ (Bennett, 1998, p.122). As such, there were conversations about how best to distribute culture to ensure it reached a wide audience so that the social benefits of this civilising effect were felt more broadly. Bennett reports that in the nineteenth century, public museums and free libraries were typically spoken about in conjunction with ‘courts, prisons, poorhouses, and, more mundanely, the provision of public sanitation and freshwater’ (Bennett, 1998, p.109). These processes and institutions were ways to transform the workingman into a civilised and prudential subject. The nineteenth century is thus an important era in the development of British public libraries, a time
when the improving and civilising effects of free libraries were articulated and made visible in the discourse and legislation on libraries.

The next significant piece of library legislation was the Public Libraries Act (1919), which empowered county councils to become library authorities. This represented the beginning of what Black and Pepper (2012) term ‘protomodernism’ and the development of a national public library network. They describe the 1920s and 1930s as the time when ‘the idea of the public library infrastructure as a ‘national network’ took root’ (2012, p.453), with the opening of more branch libraries along with standardisation and technologies that allowed them to operate as one linked network. This interwar period also saw the emergence of a modernist style of library architecture, where rather than being monumental, library buildings displayed ‘a measured, stripped classicism laced with a growing appreciation of modernist fluidity’ (Black and Pepper, 2012, p.454).

The 1960s was another important period in British public library history. In this era, much of the public library system was rebuilt, following damage sustained during World War II, as part of the spirit of reconstruction (Black, 2011). During this period, the Public Libraries and Museums Act (1964) changed the focus of legislation from being permissive to prescriptive. Black reports:

Henceforth, library authorities had a duty to provide a library service, one that was ‘comprehensive and efficient’, moreover. Further, it was to be the responsibility of the government to ‘superintend, and promote the importance of, the public library service.’ (Black, 2006, p.26)

This period thus saw an end to the age of austerity following World War II and the beginning of the age of affluence, where the welfare state invested in more cultural and educational services (Black et al., 2009). Changes in technologies and sources of entertainment also affected the identity and role of the public library. Lerner reports that after World War II, cheap paperback books and television brought an extensive range of ‘light and serious’ entertainment to a large number of people and homes across western Europe and North

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16 This Act is being used now by library campaigners to protest budget cuts and library closures in the UK, arguing that local governments have a legal duty to provide a comprehensive library service (Flood, 2015).
America (2009, p.139). This reduced the library’s role as a source of entertainment and learning. It was no longer typically considered the ‘people’s university’ or a place of self-improvement and education to the extent it was in the nineteenth century.

### 1.3 Public libraries in the United States

The first public library in the US is credited to Captain Robert Keayne, a Boston merchant, who in 1656 ‘willed his book collection to the town for a public library, stipulating that the town build a suitable building to house it’ (Harris, 1995, p.182). However, perhaps a more well-known figure associated with the first public library in the US is Benjamin Franklin. In 1728 he organised the Junto—a club of his acquaintances that met in Philadelphia for mutual self-improvement (Harris, 1995; Lerner, 2009). In 1730, Franklin suggested that the members of the Junto pool their books in a common library for the benefit of all members, and in 1731 founded America’s first subscription library, the Library Company of Philadelphia (Harris, 1995; Lerner, 2009).

By the first decades of the 1800s, several types of ‘public’ libraries had developed in the US (Murray, 2009). Glynn’s history of New York libraries between 1754 and 1911 refers to society libraries, apprentices’ and mechanics’ libraries, commercial and subscription libraries, biblical libraries, research libraries, and free public libraries (Glynn, 2015). In 1848, Massachusetts became the first state to pass legislation which authorised a municipality to raise taxes for supporting a free public library (Tyler, 2009).

The development of libraries at this time was partly a consequence of a strong emerging middle class and its demand for public education (Murray, 2009). Glynn writes of the Free Circulating Library:

> The elites who founded the free libraries sought to ease class tensions by uplifting the masses, so that those who walked and rode the trolley cars shared the same refined values as the carriage people. Reading proper books in the proper atmosphere would do more than simply foster good citizenship. The founders reported optimistically that the libraries were inculcating ‘the habits of quiet, neatness, and decorum,’ and that ‘such a place is civilizing and improving to manners as well as mind.’ (Glynn, 2015, p.203)

These nineteenth century American libraries parallel the ideology behind the free British libraries of the time, and epitomise the ideals of self-education and self-improvement. The theme
of improvement and elevating effects of culture is illustrated by the Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art, which opened in New York in 1859 (Glynn, 2015). Cooper was a wealthy manufacturer who created the Cooper Union for the ‘instruction and improvement of the inhabitants of the United States in practical science and arts’ (Glynn, 2015, p.177). The Cooper Union Library was open to the community, dedicated to leisure as well as self-culture, described by Glynn as ‘the most popular and most publicly accessible collection in the city in the second half of the nineteenth century’ (2005, p.178).

Likewise, Andrew Carnegie was an important figure whose contributions public library development emphasised the ideals of self-improvement that were prominent at the time. Carnegie was a steel magnate and philanthropist who gifted and/or assisted in the creation of nearly 3,000 public libraries in English-speaking countries\footnote{Carnegie’s first gift of a library was to his hometown of Dunfermline, Scotland in 1883 (Black et al., 2009; Murray, 2009); the first American town to receive a Carnegie-funded library was Braddock, Pennsylvania, in 1889 (Miner, 1990).}, including over 1,600 in the US (Black et al., 2009; Van Slyck, 1995).

Carnegie’s philanthropy was influenced by the social context, and his motivations for gifting libraries bear resemblance to the liberal governmentality ideals that emerged in the nineteenth century. Indeed, his philosophy of giving emanates a paternalistic air. Edens (1993) reports that, according to Carnegie, a wealthy man has an obligation to first provide for his family then use the surplus to the benefit of others. Van Slyck highlights a motivation beyond mere generosity. She quotes Carnegie:

> The main consideration should be to help those who will help themselves; to provide part of the means by which those who desire to improve may do so; to give those who desire to rise the aids by which they may rise; to assist, but rarely or never to do all. (Carnegie, 1889 cited in Van Slyck, 1995, p.10)

Thus, it is not simply about helping others, but rather helping those who have the strength and willingness to also help themselves—it is a gift with conditions. Carnegie recounted the donation by Mr Pratt of one million dollars for the Pratt Library in Baltimore and argued, ‘It is safe to say that the 37,000 frequenters of the Pratt Library are of more value to Baltimore, to
the State, and to the country than all the inert, lazy, and hopelessly-poor in the whole nation’ (Carnegie, [1889] 2009, p.106).

As Van Slyck observes, Carnegie’s philanthropy was paternalistic. His libraries were hierarchical, with the library user positioned at the bottom of a hierarchy—Carnegie himself at the top, then the board of trustees, the male librarian, the female library clerk, and finally the library user. This hierarchy was expressed spatially, too. Van Slyck gives the example of Allegheny City Library, which opened with a large marble staircase in the lobby and a delivery room that boasted a large fireplace as a focal point. Above the mantelpiece, a portrait of Carnegie watched over the room and ‘invited library users to pause and ponder their debt to Carnegie’s liberality’ (Van Slyck, 1995, p.17). The hierarchy also favoured male readers over female ones, with the ladies’ reading room being much smaller than the reference reading room.

A more obviously paternalistic element of Carnegie’s libraries was the features they included and his rationale for providing them. Miner recounts the history of the Carnegie Library of Homestead, the second Carnegie library gifted in the US in 1898. Homestead\textsuperscript{18} was another mill town where Carnegie Steel was the major employer, and the library became a cultural icon. Miner describes the library in detail:

The library itself occupied an entire city block. On all four sides, company controlled real estate insulated the library from possible encroachment of either mill or working class housing … A 20,000 volume library, flanked by two large reading rooms, occupied part of the first floor and anchored the center of the structure. The western wing contained a billiard hall and several club rooms. A 1,000 seat auditorium and music hall occupied the eastern wing. It included a 36’ by 68’ swimming pool, locker rooms and showers, four bowling alleys and, on the second floor, a basketball court, an exercise room and a running track. (Miner, 1990, pp.110-1)

This library was intended to facilitate self-improvement: to educate the people and provide for the physical and social well-being of the community. However, the Homestead Library did not quite fulfil Carnegie’s mission, for two main reasons: the men for whom the library was intended had long working hours, leaving them with little time to utilise library

\textsuperscript{18} Homestead is now a borough in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
resources, and the facilities and services offered by the library catered primarily to an elite upper-class, rather than the working class (Curtis, 1990).

The paternalism of Carnegie’s libraries, particularly in his first libraries in which he exerted more influence, bear resemblance to the liberal governmentality ideals discussed earlier. In both the UK and the US, public libraries emerged as an infrastructure through which a free individual could be moulded and improved. Civility and morality were a strong focus in the nineteenth century, and the library was a place in which these qualities could be cultivated.

Library service provision in the US saw an important development in the early decades of the twentieth century. The ideas of self-responsibility and the civilising effects of culture that were prominent in nineteenth-century library provision continued in the new century. The Great Depression during the 1930s impacted the development of American public libraries, and the New Deal economic program is noteworthy. The New Deal was a series of economic programs implemented under President Roosevelt as a response to the Great Depression, and changed the social and economic structure of the nation (Reading, 1973). The New Deal involved social as well as economic goals, and one aim was to democratise culture: ‘Roosevelt … believed that cultural enrichment was the inherent right of all Americans as much as economic justice or access to the ballot box’ (Blayney, 1977, p.235).

Part of the philosophy underlying the New Deal was the belief that art and culture should be accessible to all and it could be used as an instrument for reform (De Hart Mathews, 1975). The Federal Art Project, created as part of the New Deal, involved relief projects for unemployed artists but was also seen to have a wider social function of citizenship education and producing self-regulating, active citizens who could contribute to nation-building efforts (Gibson, 2002). Community art centres, established as part of this program, acted as sites ‘for the management and reconstruction of citizens who, for various reasons, were disaffected, disconnected, and/or defined as dysfunctional’ (Gibson, 2002, p.283).

Similar to the aims of library provision in the nineteenth century, library projects were part of a broader program that encouraged cultural management and self-management of the masses, including underprivileged and marginalised groups. Though Seavey suggests that it was local funding and initiative that was responsible for the growth in library services during this period—rather than a concerted and co-ordinated federal effort—the New Deal had a significant impact on the library profession. Public library services were expanded and two areas received attention: adult education and rural extension (Blayney, 1977). Although New Deal programs varied by state and some programs were less than successful, the attempt to expand library
services ‘represented an important phase of [the New Deal’s] commitment to democratize American culture’ (Blayney, 1977, p.245).

Furthermore, the New Deal saw a fundamental shift in attitudes towards federal funding. Prior to the 1930s, library services were provided for and funded by local communities and local governments; there was initial resistance to federal financial funding for fear of losing autonomy. By the end of the decade, federal aid came to be expected as an inherent right. This period in American public library history, therefore, saw the significance of libraries in the quest for cultural democracy as well as expectations of financial responsibility—issues that remain relevant for contemporary libraries.

1.4 The development of public libraries in Australia

1.4.1 Establishing Australian libraries

Like the UK and the US, the development of libraries in Australia forms part of social and cultural histories. In this section, I outline some of the influences that shaped Australian public library history. My more specific focus is NSW, the locale of this research.

Australia’s history as a British colony had a significant influence on its library history. The first libraries were founded with the idea of improving morality and civility, as in the UK and US. For example, the Wesleyan Library in Hobart opened in 1825 with a strong emphasis on religious and moral works (Biskup, 1995). By the 1830s, Mechanics’ Institutes (or Schools of Art) were proliferating and by 1900 there were 1000 such institutes across the country. These were brought to Australia by free settlers from Britain and grew out of the movement for popular education in the nineteenth century. These institutes performed an educational, cultural, and social role, and were Australia’s first civic centres and libraries (Biskup, 1995; Metcalfe, 1958). Candy reports:

Of all the functions performed by the institutes, probably the most universal, the most obvious, and certainly the most extensively documented was the provision of library services. At a time when reading was surprisingly widespread, and other diversions were

19 The Sydney Mechanics’ School of Art (SMSA) opened in 1833 and is still in operation today (Biskup, 1995; SMSA, n.d.)
less common than they are today, there was a thirst for knowledge about what was happening outside one's immediate vicinity and consequently the provision of books, journals and newspapers was a vital component of the institute's role. (Candy, 1994, p.8)

The directors of mechanics' institutes saw their libraries as either 'improvers' that raised the moral tone of the community or 'entertainers' that offered a wholesome alternative to the public house (Candy, 1994).

Circulating libraries, which appeared in the UK in the early eighteenth century (Zeegers and Barron, 2010) proliferated in Australia between the 1930s and 1960s and were another important influence in Australian library history (Harvey, 2007). They were also known as subscription libraries or commercial lending libraries and, as this latter name suggests, they were based in commercial enterprise, were more general in content, and stocked both fiction and non-fiction (Eliot, 2006).

Free municipal libraries were established in Australia from the 1850s. The Municipalities Act was passed in NSW in 1858, which put local amenities including libraries in the remit of local council. Amended legislation enacted in 1867 gave local councils the power to levy a library rate to fund libraries (Biskup, 1995). However, these libraries were established as reference libraries (as opposed to circulating libraries) and were poorly maintained, leaving only 'the Broken Hill Free Public Library surviv[ing] until the passing in 1939 of completely new library legislation’ (Biskup, 1995, p.5).

The Library Act 1939 is a fundamental piece of legislation for public libraries in NSW that still governs their operations. However, despite the passing of legislation, the Library Act 1939 did not come into operation until after 1944 because of WWII. Additionally, local councils were not compelled to adopt the Act, and the Junee municipality was the last to adopt the legislation in 1993. Across Australia more generally, public libraries were not established in large numbers until at least 1945 (McColvin, 1947; Metcalfe, 1958).

The establishment of municipal libraries in Australia was also influenced by the Munn-Pitt report, published before the Library Act 1939 was passed. Ralph Munn, then the director of the Pittsburgh Public Library in the US, was invited to Australia in 1934 to survey Australia’s
public libraries (Whitlam, 1986). He was joined by Ernest Pitt, the Principal Librarian of the Public Library of Victoria. Their work culminated in a report published in 1935. It recommended:

The establishment of combined state-municipal libraries in all capital cities … [O]utside the capital cities the creation of free municipal libraries subsidised by the state government … [T]he National Library should develop a national role as a great depository of specialised books and historical records and in providing other libraries with bibliographical and cataloguing services. (Whitlam, 1986, p.41)

Library historian David Jones reports that the initial response to the Munn-Pitt Report was enthusiasm and optimism, gaining the support of William Herbert Ifould, the Principal Librarian of the Public Library of New South Wales (Jones, 1995a). However, Biskup argues that the report was criticised as harsh and unsympathetic. He admits that Munn accurately observed, in 1934, that:

There was in Australia little pressure for public libraries, that the state libraries were languishing, that the university libraries were inadequate and librarianship as a profession nonexistent. (Biskup, 1995, p.9)

However, Biskup also contends that Munn arrived in Australia with preconceived ideas and did not adequately consider Australia’s socio-cultural context. At the time, Australia was ‘an economic and cultural appendage of Britain, tied by trade and tradition to the former metropolis from which it was isolated by distance and the slowness of existing communication links’ and was still suffering the effects of a general depression (Biskup, 1995, p.9).

The Munn-Pitt Report is often credited with the formation of the Free Library Movement, a lay pressure group that encouraged the establishment of free libraries and was

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20 Gough Whitlam delivered an address in November 1985 at a function organised by the Australian Library Promotion Council, held at the SLNSW, in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Munn-Pitt Report. This address was then published in the Australian Library Journal.

21 Jones published three articles in a series outlining the establishment of a free public library system in NSW. There was initial support and enthusiasm, then the publication of another important report, the Ifould Report, and finally uncertainty before the Library Act was passed in 1939 (Jones, 1995a; 1995b; 1995c).
instrumental in the passing of the *Library Act 1939* (Biskup, 1995; Jones, 1995a; McColvin, 1947). However, Biskup argues that much of what was said in the report had been suggested earlier and ‘the report was in fact a symptom of the social and cultural resurgence and renewal in Australia during the 1930s’ (1995, p.110). The 1930s saw the growth of a diverse cultural and intellectual class, and the development of economic self-reliance and national cultural identity, which Serle (1973) terms Australia’s ‘coming of age’.

As mentioned, the *Library Act 1939* did not see widespread adoption until after the war. The implications of World War II and its aftermath for Australia affected library services. The economic expansion that occurred, coupled with returning servicemen boosting university populations, increased demand for technological information. This resulted in a rapid expansion of the nation’s university libraries. Additionally, the National Library became a separate entity from the Parliamentary Library in 1960 (and is distinct from the National Archives of Australia) (Biskup, 1995).

Another important event in the post-war years was the publication of the McColvin Report. In 1946, Lionel McColvin, then the Librarian of the City of Westminster in London, was invited to Australia to complete a tour and survey of Australian public libraries. McColvin was met in Australia by John Metcalfe, the principal librarian at the Public Library of NSW and an executive member of the Library Board of NSW. McColvin’s visit spanned three months and took him around the country. The resulting report, *Public Libraries in Australia: present conditions and future possibilities, with notes on other library services*, was published in 1947.

In this report, McColvin expressed disappointment in Australian libraries, observing that progress was not particularly impressive nor did libraries have a wide geographical reach. As Jones remarked:

> McColvin’s opinions tumbled from the pages of the Report. Canberra was too small for a major research library. Each state should have a union catalogue, but there was no need for a national one. Central cataloguing was worth pursuing. There should be no charges for borrowing fiction. (Jones, 2005, p.395)

He then delivered his ‘programme for library development for Australia’ (McColvin, 1947) which included ‘a library act, a library board, a partnership between state and local government, centralised processing, a library school, a central lending library for people in very remote areas, and bulk loans, including children’s books, to some local libraries’ (Jones, 2005,
He also recommended the expansion of the Australian Institute of Librarians (AIL) as well as the professionalisation of librarianship, two things that moved in tandem. McColvin drew a parallel with the UK and US: ‘In both these countries libraries have prospered very largely because there have been associations—the Library Association and the American Library Association’ (McColvin, 1947, pp.97-8). Those associations not only advocated for the professionalisation of librarianship; they could draw ideas and aid from a wide circle as library-promoting organisations (McColvin, 1947).

McColvin’s report attracted similar criticism to the Munn-Pitt Report. The NSW parliamentary librarian, HL McLoskey, believed that McColvin failed to understand Australian conditions and how they differed from those in the UK and the US, ‘where library services have been intensively developed over a long period’ (McLoskey, 1948, p.35). Specifically, McLoskey argued that a centralised system of libraries, as McColvin advocated, would not work in NSW. The NSW library system, McLoskey pointed out, ‘is fundamentally based on the principle of local government responsibility aided by government subsidy’ (1948, p.38). McLoskey was a proponent of a decentralised system where the state government passes on responsibility of public libraries to local governments. He argued that local areas are so diverse in their needs and stage of development that having ‘control from a great bureaucratic centre stationed in a capital city would not … produce nearly such good results as the combined efforts of the individual areas catering for their own local needs’ (ibid.).

Jones describes McColvin’s influence as twofold. The first impact McColvin had was in the visit itself, when he ‘enthused librarians and laity alike’ (Jones 2005, p.401). Jones makes an important point on the effect: ‘Looking back from an age when visits by overseas experts—real and so-called—are commonplace, we may not realise what an impact this leading British librarian had on his audiences at the time’ (ibid.). McColvin spoke with librarians, politicians and councillors about library policy and what he believed Australian public libraries needed. McColvin’s second impact, argues Jones, is in the report itself. Although the report was written hastily, it ‘recaptured some of the flavour of McColvin’s addresses and conversations during his visit as well as the enthusiasm which he had generated in his audiences’ (Jones, 2005, p.402).

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22 McColvin responded to McCloskey’s criticisms in a rejoinder published six months later, addressing each of McLoskey’s points. He adds, ‘And his is by no means the first library I have criticised. I have criticised libraries for many years, and I have always found that progressive, competent librarians welcomed criticism because it strengthened their hands’ (McColvin, 1948, p.71).
McColvin’s report, along with the Munn-Pitt report, has become an important part of Australian public library history. These reports reveal the heavy influence that British and American models of public libraries had on Australian library development. During the post-war period, there was a concerted effort to develop a national library policy in Australia, involving university libraries, special libraries, local libraries, and the national library. The question of federal funding assistance for local public libraries was also debated during this period.

This post-war era from the 1940s to 1970s was a particularly important time in Australian public library history. Libraries were one of several municipal, suburban institutions that proliferated in the mid-twentieth century as part of a community-building effort (discussed further in chapter six). At this time, there were libraries but their distribution was uneven. In the 1940s and 1950s, after the publication of the Munn-Pitt and McColvin reports, there was a more concerted effort to create everyday spaces for community and learning, and suburban libraries expanded rapidly (Goad and Nichols, 2010).

In 1975, the Labor Whitlam Government commissioned a report on the general needs of public libraries (Whitlam, 1986). The work was completed by a committee headed by Allan Horton, the librarian of the University of New South Wales, and the resulting report was published in 1976 (Horton and Australian Library Promotion Council, 1976). Whitlam notes that the report ‘revealed serious deficiencies in the distribution and standard of public libraries in Australia’ (1986, p.43). More specifically, the report recommended that libraries needed to improve the quality, numbers and training of staff, as well as stocks of books, other materials and equipment used (Horton, 1976). The report proposed a plan to address the deficiencies in public libraries involving the three levels of government and backed by federal funding.

However, the subsequent Fraser Government declared a ‘new federalism’, with a more clearly defined separation of federal and state government responsibilities. This shifted responsibility of local libraries to the states (Biskup, 1995). The state governments lifted their expenditure on public libraries, and Biskup reports, ‘In 1979 state support for public libraries

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23 Since public libraries began in Australia, there have been numerous reports produced about their present states and potential futures. These types of reports began with ones by visiting librarians such as the Munn Pitt Report and the McColvin Report. In the 1990s, reports were written by Colin Mercer, including a national survey of library users and non-users (Mercer, 1995) and a vision for the future of libraries in Australia (Mercer, 1996). Apart from these specific reports, regular reports on the state of libraries and librarianship in Australia are produced by ALIA, State Libraries, and Friends of Libraries Australia. Local councils may also commission or produce reports and research specific to their own library systems such as the Fairfield City Ages Services Survey (Fairfield City Council and Economic Strategies Pty Ltd, 2005).
comprised thirty per cent of all [library] funding, the highest level since the early 1960s’ (1995, p.91). Since then, that figure has been declining—Biskup notes that in 1992, 11.5 per cent of local library funding in NSW was provided by the state government. The figure in 2014 is around 7 per cent (NSWPLA, 2014).

1.4.2 Legislative context: NSW public libraries now

There are 367 libraries in NSW that attract almost 35 million visits a year and have over 3 million members (State Library of New South Wales, n.d.). Public libraries in Australia are not governed by federal legislation, but rather state acts. In NSW, libraries are governed by the Library Act 1939. This Act specifies the roles of the Library Council of NSW (hereafter ‘Library Council’), the SLNSW, and local libraries. The Act charges the Library Council with making inquiry into the management and operation of every local library in the state, and the SLNSW supports this task by collecting statistics from councils about their services on an annual basis (State Library of New South Wales, 2015a).

In relation to local libraries, the Library Act 1939 sets out provisions for all councils which have adopted the Act, which as of April 2016, includes all councils in NSW. Importantly, Section 10A of the Act states that a local authority may establish a library committee and can delegate to the committee all or any of the duties of the council related to the provision, control, and management of libraries. This means that many day-to-day operations of libraries are under the control of the library manager and other senior library staff, with some separation from other council departments. Though the library is part of the council, they are envisaged almost as two distinct entities. This is discussed more in chapters three and six in relation to the three libraries researched.

Under the Act, libraries are mandated to comply with the following requirements:

(a) Residents and ratepayers entitled to free membership
(b) Free access to certain materials on library premises
(c) Free loans of certain library material to members
(d) Free delivery to sick or disabled members
(e) Free basic reference services to members
Additionally, sitting under the *Library Act 1939* is the *Library Regulation 2010*, which makes provisions about:

(a) the management of the State Library and of local libraries (including the maximum fee that may be charged for the late return of borrowed library material),
(b) the conduct of users of the State Library and local libraries,
(c) the amount used for the purposes of calculating the yearly subsidy payable to certain councils in respect of library services and related facilities provided by those councils,
(d) the determination of local populations for subsidy purposes,
(e) savings and formal matters.

This regulation also stipulates what is acceptable behaviour in a library, and how library materials should be treated, as seen in Document 1.1.
Part 3 Use of libraries and library material

9 Certain things must not be taken into a reading room

A person entering any library with any umbrella, bag, case or package, or any photographic or other equipment, must not take it beyond any vestibule of a library except with the consent of the governing body for the library.

Maximum penalty: 2 penalty units.

10 Reproduction of library material

(1) The governing body of a library may give notice to users of the library that certain library material of the library is unsuitable for reproduction.

(2) A person must not photograph, photocopy, trace or otherwise reproduce (whether by electronic or digital reproduction) any such library material.

Maximum penalty: 2 penalty units.

Note. See the Copyright Act 1968 of the Commonwealth for other restrictions on making copies of works (as defined in that Act).

11 Damaging library material or equipment

(1) A person must not damage, deface or improperly interfere with any library material of a library or any equipment provided by a library for the purposes of accessing library material.

Maximum penalty: 2 penalty units.

(2) For the avoidance of doubt, turning down the page of a book or otherwise causing any printed matter or the like to become creased is damaging library material.

12 Deliberate misplacing or hiding of library material

A person must not wilfully misplace or hide any library material, or any record of the library material, of any library.

Maximum penalty: 2 penalty units.

13 Noise

A person must not by speech or otherwise make any more noise in any library than is reasonably necessary for the use of the library.

Maximum penalty: 2 penalty units.

Public libraries are also governed by the Local Government Act 1993, which affects functions such as the hiring of staff. The library is part of the local council, thus while the Library Act 1939 is the more directly relevant piece of legislation, the Local Government Act 1993 also mandates elements of a library’s operations. Local councils play a prominent role in public library provision. They provide the bulk of funding for public libraries—in 2013/2014, local
government expenditure on public library services in NSW totalled $35 million. In contrast, state government funding for public library services in that period amounted to $25 million (State Library of New South Wales, 2015a).

In present times, there is an emphasis on inclusiveness and the free nature of the public library, with all residents and ratepayers being able to join, and the specification that anyone can use certain materials on library premises regardless of membership status. This has implications for certain members of society, such as the homeless and travellers; transient populations are as welcome in a library as the more permanent population served by the library. Furthermore, the informational role of the library is a significant part of its identity, as evidenced by the legislated provision of the free delivery of information to sick and disabled library members, and free basic reference services to members.

1.5 Professionalisation of librarianship

Librarians exercise a distinct form of authority and expertise; they are one part of a governmental machine and are one agent within the understanding of the library as a dispositif. Various structures legitimise this expertise and build up the library as a governmental apparatus. The focus in this section is on the professionalisation of librarianship that has occurred in Australia, the role of professional institutions in ‘making’ librarians, and the subsequent effects on the production of library spaces, collections, and services.

In Australia, as in the UK, US, and other countries, there are professional bodies that provide structure and objectives for librarians and libraries. The Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) presents itself as the ‘peak body for professionals, staff, institutions, vendors, educators and other stakeholders’ for the Australian library and information sector (Australian Library and Information Association, 2014, para.1). In the UK, the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) hold a similar role; in the US, the American Library Association (ALA) performs a comparable function. Importantly, these professional bodies stipulate what skills and knowledge are required to be identified as a library professional—both through their accreditation of degree courses and the expected standards by which librarians and libraries ought to operate.

Professionalisation of librarianship in Australia is not a new phenomenon. In 1896, the Library Association of Australasia was established in Melbourne. The Principal Librarian of the Public Library of New South Wales recommended that the Association consider formal
education and training for librarians with examinations and certification (Keane, 1982b, 1982a). The first formal examinations in librarianship occurred in 1916. However, the focus of these examinations was not education but rather as an avenue for promotions and salary increases (Keane, 1982a).

Professionalisation was further strengthened with the implementation of library legislation, as the various Library Actss provided the states with a motivation to establish schools and classes in librarianship (Keane, 1982a). Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, various training schools and examinations were held across Australia, and professional associations were formed. In the 1950s, professionalisation continued to develop, and the first issue of The Australian Library Journal (ALJ) was published by the Library Association of Australia in 1951. In the 1960s, standards for courses were adopted and the University of New South Wales began to offer a Master of Librarianship by research, indicating a more rigorous standard. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, more universities began offering courses in librarianship.

However, education for librarianship in Australia in the early twenty-first century has been criticised. Harvey (2001) argues that librarianship does not have a clear identity within universities, without sufficient differentiation between various roles such as technicians and librarians. He also suggests that library education is lacking in quality, especially compared with training programs in Canada and the US.

Education of librarians in Australia is currently delivered by universities and Technical and Further Education (TAFE) vocational-training institutes, in collaboration with ALIA. ALIA works with education institutions as well as other stakeholders to produce courses and degrees that equip graduates with the skills and knowledge required of the profession. It accredits courses at three levels: librarian, information specialist, and library technician. ALIA states that it is:

The body which sets and maintains standards for entry into the library and information profession in Australia. It plays a vital role in ensuring that education for the profession produces graduates who have the ability to provide excellent library and information services to benefit the nation and individual clients and who can respond to and meet the

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24 The journal is now published by ALIA.
25 M. V. Keane provides a full chronology of the education for librarianship in Australia between 1896 and 1976 (1982b).
ever-changing information needs of a dynamic society. (Australian Library and Information Association, 2009, para.3)

Librarianship is a study in information organisation in ALIA-accredited courses. In NSW, two universities offer ALIA accredited Masters-level courses, required for librarian and information specialists: Charles Sturt University (CSU) (Master of Information Studies) and the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS) (Master of Digital Information Management). UTS also offer a Graduate Diploma of Digital Information Management, and both universities offer Bachelor degrees in library and information management. The CSU degree requires students to complete units in information sources and services, and various specialisations including children’s librarianship, library leadership, and information architecture (Charles Sturt University, 2015). The UTS course requires students to complete units in knowledge management strategies, information research methodologies, and information and knowledge management (University of Technology, Sydney, 2015).

These courses, while necessary to practise as a librarian, claim to be broader than librarianship in terms of career prospects, and graduates can work in areas such as archives, research, community information management, and information architecture. CSU markets its course as providing graduates with ‘an in-depth understanding of the creation, evaluation, collection, organisation, utilisation and dissemination of information in the contemporary information environment’ (Charles Sturt University, n.d., para.1). Librarianship is no longer about simply training librarians, but about training information specialists who can work in a range of fields.

Job advertisements highlight the formalisation and professionalism of librarianship in Australia. Even lower-level jobs such as ‘library assistant’ typically require formal qualifications. For example, one library describes the role as follows:

Library Assistants are our front line customer service staff and work in all areas of the library. They are passionate about giving back to the community. The work is varied and can see you helping a customer to locate information on the internet, find a needed book or magazine, read stories to children during weekly story-time, or clear the book return chute and replace books on shelves. (City of Ryde, 2015)
Requirements for the role include ‘library qualifications or extensive work experience in a library.’ (ibid.) The term ‘library qualifications’ is somewhat vague and does not necessarily mean tertiary qualifications such as a bachelor or Master’s degree, and could include a graduate diploma from TAFE or similar. However, to assume the title of ‘librarian’, tertiary qualifications are required. In one advertisement for the position of librarian, the first essential requirement listed is ‘Tertiary qualifications (University Degree) in Library and Information Science allowing professional membership of the Australian Library and Information Association’ (City of Canterbury, 2015). This emphasises the importance of formal education and the significant role played by professional organisations—to use the title ‘librarian’ and assume the authority bestowed on the role, one must have an accredited degree and the ability to formally join the professional organisation. The possession of an accredited degree grants legitimacy to their expertise, authority and title of ‘librarian’.

Apart from formal education and qualifications, other devices act on libraries such as particular structures and discourses in the form of reports, guidelines. Professional institutions such as ALIA and the National and State Libraries Australasia (NSLA), as well as the SLNSW, communicate their ideas, research findings, trends, and recommendations in various ways. Information is disseminated through devices such as conferences, seminars, reports, email lists, blogs and other social media which influence librarians’ decisions and actions. Two reports are worth mentioning here. The SLNSW published a report titled People Places: A Guide for Public Library Buildings in NSW in 2000, with the third and most recent edition released in 2012. This report sets benchmarks on the size and design of public library buildings, and is designed for use by local councils as a planning tool for serving the library needs of the local population. In 2012, ALIA also released the Beyond a Quality Service: Strengthening the Social Fabric report, which specified standards and guidelines for Australian public libraries. This report examined the physical space of libraries and offered guidance on collection development, library management systems, and customer service. Both reports are discussed in greater detail later, specifically in chapters four and five.

One final aspect of the professionalisation of librarianship is information dissemination, and Library and Information Science is a distinct field of study. In Australia, ALIA distributes information through various avenues. First, it publishes The Australian Library Journal, a peer-reviewed journal that is the organisation's flagship publication (Australian Library Journal, 2014), as well as INCITE, the magazine for its members. The other means of information dissemination and industry engagement is the ALIA conference, which further highlights the
professionalisation of librarianship; the national conference in 2014 was billed as the ‘major event in the Australian Library and Information calendar in 2014’ (Australian Library and Information Association, 2015b).

These publications and conferences are situated within a broader international context of publications and events. The Scopus journal ranking website lists 205 journals categorised under ‘library and information sciences’ (SCImago, 2015), including the Journal of Librarianship and Information Science, which is marketed as a ‘peer-reviewed international quarterly journal for librarians, information scientists, specialists, managers and educators interested in keeping up to date with the most recent issues and developments in the field’ (SAGE journals, 2015).

The way the professionalism, discipline, and structure of librarianship influences the making of public libraries is explored in greater detail throughout this thesis. These reports and guidelines, degrees and courses, publications and conferences all produce ideas of what a public library ought to be—but there are forces from outside the library profession that also bear on library practices.

1.6 The influence of the book publishing industry

1.6.1 Book publishing and retailing

Although the library has broadened its scope considerably to become a multifaceted site of recreation, leisure, and learning, its identity remains bound up in books and reading. As such, the book publishing and book retailing industries contribute to the ‘making’ of public libraries. The library is not only a civic and public space; rather it is situated at a junction where private and commercial interests intersect with civic and governmental forces.

Bookselling and book publishing in Australia matured throughout the 1990s and 2000s, and even earlier than that bookselling was a healthy and diverse industry. In Sydney in 1977, there were 237 independent bookshops, by 1987 that figure had grown to 370, and by 1997 to 502 bookshops (Li, 2010). More important than these raw numbers are the different book retailing outlets and changes in their proportions of market share. The market share of chain bookshops and discount department stores were increasing, and the share of independent bookshops declined throughout the 1980s to 2000s. In the late 2000s independent bookshops comprised approximately 20 per cent of the book retailing market in Australia (Dryden, 2007; Li, 2010). In 2008, I undertook research on the impact of rationalisation and consolidation in retailing on independent bookshops in Sydney. At the time, the struggles facing bookshops in
the UK and US such as the growth of chain bookshops and online retailing had not drastically affected independent bookshops in Sydney (Li, 2008, 2010). Amazon was not significantly cheaper or more convenient than buying from a bricks-and-mortar bookshop, due to exchange rates, shipping costs, and shipping times. E-books were also not popular, though the first e-readers had been around since the 1990s.

The late 2000s ended up being a turning point for book retailing in Australia. Bookselling was healthy in the 1990s and 2000s, but in the early 2010s, there were substantial changes in the industry (Coronel, 2013a). There was an increase in Australians’ use of Amazon and online retailing due to the Australian dollar reaching parity with the US dollar, heavily discounted prices and free shipping from sites such as Book Depository. A mass take-up of e-books also occurred at this time, particularly following the release of the Amazon Kindle—while e-books were not common in 2008, by 2013 they had dramatically increased in popularity. Furthermore, there was rationalisation in the industry with the collapse of two major book retailing chains, Borders and Angus and Robertson (Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 2011a; Lim, 2011) and mergers of large publishers such as Random House and Penguin in 2013 (Books and Publishing, 2013).

Nevertheless, book culture remains strong. There are writers’ festivals, literary magazines, and author events occurring regularly in bookshops and libraries. Reading habits and buying patterns of Australians are changing and will continue to change, but books are still read. Recent figures show book sales declining slightly from previous years, with online and e-book sales continuing to grow. In 2012, book sales were down 6.3 per cent in volume and 9.3 per cent in value compared with 2011; the retail book market in 2012 was below A$1 billion, compared with A$1.3 billion in 2010 (Coronel, 2013b). In contrast, online sales of physical books continue to grow. Estimates suggest they now comprise around 20 per cent of all book sales with Amazon and The Book Depository each reporting turnover of more than A$100 million to Australian customers annually (ibid.). These statistics and circumstances relate to commercial bookselling, a different segment to public libraries. Nevertheless, the changes to traditional book retailers and publishers, as well as in the reading world more generally, have had an impact on libraries.

A clearer way of seeing the shifts in the book world, affecting bookshops, publishers, and libraries alike is in the greater marketization of books and the celebrity author. Books and authors are now promoted in ways traditionally seen in other forms of media such as trailers and advertisements in public spaces like bus shelters. Reading has become more than just the reader and the book: it increasingly involves watching, listening, and participating in other related activities (see Collins, 2010; Fuller and Rehberg Sedo, 2013; Miller, 2006). And, as discussed in
chapters five and seven, the library has become a site for the participation in reading as a social act and another mechanism through which books can be promoted.

Another significant change in publishing and the book industry that affects libraries is the growth in e-books, which is having a profound impact on library collections. There are impacts on general collections in terms of the take-up of e-books, especially in the children’s, non-fiction and referencing categories. A report by ALIA and the Australian Public Library Alliance (APLA) revealed that in 2014, 97 per cent of Australian public libraries loaned e-books, an increase from 69 per cent in 2013, and on average, e-books comprised 5–6 per cent of a library’s collection (Australian Library and Information Association and Australian Public Library Alliance, 2014). Although almost all public libraries now lend e-books, they are a relatively small part of collections overall, and even less significant as a proportion of loans. The report showed that in 53 per cent of libraries, e-books made up less than 1 per cent of loans, and in almost all libraries, they accounted for less than 5 per cent of loans (Australian Library and Information Association and Australian Public Library Alliance, 2014, p.2).

Despite the rapid and wide-reaching take-up of e-books by both libraries and the wider public, publishers have been reluctant to allow public libraries to lend e-books. Some have refused to allow libraries to lend e-books, others forced libraries to re-purchase the title after a certain number of loans or charged significantly higher prices to libraries. In 2013, developments were made in the US, with all major publishers in the US engaged in library e-book lending at some level (American Library Association, 2014a). However, the ALIA and APLA report reveals that for e-books in Australia, ‘between half and two thirds of libraries are less than satisfied or not satisfied with the choice of bestsellers, books by Australians, popular authors and overall content’ (2014, p.2).

Libraries’ exposure to developments in the book retailing and publishing industries is also mediated through their purchasing arrangements. Most public libraries purchase the majority of items in their collections from specialist library suppliers, often by specifying the types of books appropriate for their collections and thereby outsourcing the process of collection development to an extent. Some libraries purchase a small amount of their collection from local bookshops. In terms of e-books, there are specific providers for public libraries; the three most popular e-book providers in Australia in 2014 were OverDrive, Bolinda, and Wheelers (Australian Library and Information Association and Australian Public Library Alliance, 2014). Collection development processes are examined more in chapter five.
1.6.2 New visions of the public library

New digital technologies and media formats have transformed ways of reading and accessing information, and this has also inspired new understandings of what a library could be. Mattern has explored the impacts of digital technology on libraries’ collections in the US, and set out a broad vision for what libraries could become. In looking at small, grassroots, ‘pop up’ libraries that have emerged—the ‘little libraries in the urban margins’—she highlights the civic and social role and potential of libraries (Mattern, 2012). These projects can function as art exhibitions or libraries or both. An example she describes is the Urban Neighbourhood Institution (Uni), a ‘portable reading room for public space’. It consists of:

144 open-faced, trapezoidal cubes stackable in various configurations depending upon the site and program; thus far the Uni has been installed at the New Amsterdam Market in Manhattan and at the Brooklyn Book Festival on Borough Hall Plaza. Each 16-inch cube can hold 10 to 15 books, and each is outfitted with a weather-resistant protective cover which, when removed, can double as a bench, a table, a podium, or a display surface. (Mattern, 2012, para.40)

Uni has a non-circulating collection that the public can browse and appeals to various tastes, holding art books, children’s books, poetry, short stories, and reference volumes. While Mattern cautions that these kinds of ‘libraries in the margins’ do not replace the institution of the public library, they speak to themes and trends emerging in public libraries now: flexibility, innovation, community-centeredness, and a focus on people. Nate Hill, then the Deputy Director of Chattanooga Public Library in Tennessee, US has emphasised the changing focus on the library users and the way library space is used. He explains, ‘It’s about observing how library users are actually using the facility and then creating structures to enable those users to engage in the different activities they want to be doing’ (Mattern and Hill, 2014, para.11). Hill observes:

The very definition of a library is a pool of shared resources. We tend to think of it as books. But there are also tool-lending libraries and other examples. In Chattanooga, we’ve chosen to focus on making resources available that enable production. The shift
from access to media toward access to tools is very interesting. In the '90s and early '00s, public programming\textsuperscript{26} in libraries was considered a loss leader that took up staff time but was useful to attract people to the library that would check out books. We’re seeing this turn around: now access to people and access to knowledge is what we’re about. (Mattern and Hill, 2014, para.16)

In this respect, public libraries are becoming as much about content production and creation as it is about preservation and access. The provision of various resources in the form of hardware and software, and the creation of spaces within the library dedicated to collaborative, productive work indicates a shift in thinking about the library’s identity.

In 2013, a new library opened in the US that was devoid of physical books. BiblioTech—the Bexar County digital library in San Antonio, Texas—opened with an offering of 10,000 e-books, audiobooks, 600 e-readers, and 48 computer stations (Chappell, 2013). Yet in many respects this library is similar to other public libraries, as is evidence in its events calendar for August 2014 (Figure 1.1).

\textsuperscript{26} ‘Programming’ in libraries refers to events and activities libraries run or host, and have become important elements of their offerings. Events commonly seen in libraries include computer classes, author events, skills-based workshops such as CV-writing, and reading and writing groups.
This calendar boasts storytime events, digital music workshops, computer classes and family movie nights. The library also hosts a monthly book club that can be attended in person or virtually. According to the library’s mission statement, its role is:

To provide all Bexar County residents the opportunity to access technology and its applications for the purposes of enhancing education and literacy, promoting reading as recreation and equipping residents of our community with necessary tools to thrive as citizens of the 21st century. (BiblioTech Digital Library, n.d.)

The mission and vision of BiblioTech is congruous with the mission and vision of many traditional, book-holding public libraries in terms of providing for education, literacy, and recreation, and the broader goal of being an institution for the improvement of the citizenry.

The Edge in Queensland, Australia, is another example of a bookless library space that is perhaps even further from the library stereotype. The Edge is a ‘collaborative learning space’, a bookless library that was launched by the State Library of Queensland in 2010 and conceived as a prototype of a library of the future (State Library of Queensland, n.d.). It has been described as
providing ‘technical infrastructure, multimedia equipment, and collaboration spaces’, and the most prominent feature of the space is that it ‘envisions a community of users to help, learn, teach, and collaborate with each other’ (Bilandzic and Foth, 2013, pp.2–3). The focus is on collaboration and social learning, a mission that is different from BiblioTech.

While these two examples are, to some extent, outliers, changes are happening in traditional libraries too. Thomas (2000) wrote that a vision of a paperless society, and a library without book stacks and reference desks, has been around since the 1970s. At the time of her writing in 2000, the paperless library did not yet exist, but library spaces were starting to accommodate digital technologies. Around the same time, Atkinson (2001) presented a vision of what the library ought to do in the new technological environment. He argues that it will have to become a gathering place, a geographical space where people can meet and interact: ‘the new library must be mainly a social gathering place, somewhat noisy, with plenty of coffee’ (Atkinson, 2001, p.8). He also reiterates the purpose of the library as a place of information and knowledge—a purpose that has not changed, even though the method of information delivery continues to change. Librarians still need to assess the validity of new sources of information and ensure ways of linking users with the information they need—they act as navigators in this new world of information, an extension of their traditional role (Johnson, 2010).

Now, information-seeking, information-storing, and library spaces and services are delivered in new ways—the digital transition has occurred. Changes in the information landscape are ‘transforming teaching and learning, scholarly communication and the role of ‘traditional’ research library services’ (Rowlands et al., 2008, p.293). There are new sources of information as well as new technologies through which information is accessible. However, concerns have been raised about the ability of people, particularly young people, to search for information in this new environment—they often have difficulty choosing correct search terms and assessing information for validity and accuracy (Rowlands et al., 2008). There are skills required for navigating this world of digital information that need to be learnt and taught, which are capable of being acquired in the public library.

It is not only information-seeking that has noticeably changed since the early 2000s. New technologies have affected the physical space of libraries, with implications for goals such as

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27 A prescient comment, given the publication of an article in a professional journal titled not long after ‘Covered Beverages Now Allowed: Public Libraries and Book Superstores’ (McKechnie et al., 2004).
community-building. For example, Begg (2009) investigated the use of space within public libraries in two British government authorities over time in response to concerns over the ‘death of the library book’. She claims that there is now less space for books in public libraries and books are marginalised.

Niegaard (2011) observes that library buildings in Denmark are transforming from book-dominated spaces to ones where the focus is on access to both print and digital resources and on creating holistic cultural and knowledge libraries. She remarks that ‘Danish surveys point out that half of library users don’t come to borrow books but to use the library as a place of sanctuary and a place for information, inspiration, and work’ (Niegaard, 2011, p.177). She offers a vision of the library in the future, such as a building containing more open stacks, activity zones, and new citizens’ services to create a space that is more than just about physical books.

The research presented in this thesis was conducted between 2012 and 2015, with the bulk of fieldwork completed in 2013. By this time, digital technologies had become an everyday part of a library’s offering that was both expected and commonplace. There are even guidelines set by the State Library and ALIA regarding what a library should be providing its users in terms of computers, internet and WiFi. I do not examine in detail the digital technologies in libraries due to the rapid pace of change, but the implications these technologies have on spaces and collections are touched on in chapters three and five.

Conclusion

Three key findings emerge from the discussion in this chapter on the development of and influences on public libraries that guide the rest of this thesis. First, public libraries have long been associated with ideas of self-improvement and creating an educated, moral and civil population—ideas that are seen in the libraries of the nineteenth century in the UK and US (Black et al., 2009; Glynn, 2015; Joyce, 1999). These philosophies also had an influence in early Australian cultural institutions such as Mechanics Institutes and Schools of Arts (Candy, 1994). Drawing on the works of Foucault, Rose, Joyce and Otter, I highlighted the position of the library as an instrument of liberal governmentality and as a dispositif. The library can be understood as a site where governments can exert some control or influence of the population and this is achieved in various ways: through the collection, its spaces, and the various strategies used to inculcate a reading habit.
Second, there was a growing importance of municipal provision of Australian public libraries throughout the twentieth century (Biskup, 1995). In 2015, local governments in NSW provide the bulk of public library funding and public libraries are firmly embedded within local councils. The story of public libraries in Australia is also a story of municipal provision and how libraries are understood as a local council service.

Third, despite its position within local government, and despite financial and governance responsibilities for public libraries largely falling to local councils, they are not the only actors shaping public library services. Libraries are not simply governing instruments; they also reflect broader systems and processes such as market forces, commercialisation, and increasing education, training and professionalisation. Multiple forces act on public libraries and shape their collections, spaces, and programs such as professional organisations, state libraries, the book publishing and retailing industries, other commercial actors such as library suppliers, and new digital technologies.

The emerging technologies and evolving understandings of the library have changed the relationship between the library and its users: rather than a paternalistic view of libraries guiding citizens towards cultural enlightenment, the library’s role has become one of facilitating access to content and knowledge, with the user playing a more active and engaged part.

These various developments and forces contributing to the making of public libraries—attitudes and philosophies, funding structures, legislation, related industries such as publishing and book retailing, and new digital technologies—are important material and discursive elements of the library dispositif. In this research, I explore the way these forces and understandings shape the contemporary public library in Australia and how it is simultaneously a node within a broader network of reading institutions and a visible arm of the municipal authority. In the following chapter, I address the ways this research was undertaken.
Chapter 2
Researching the library

Introduction

Conceiving of the library as a dispositif structured the way this research was undertaken. The way I use the concept is similar to how Braun (2014) and Lee (2014) understand objects and discourses—as part of a wider array of technologies used in the management of urban life and spaces. Braun (2014) draws upon the dispositif to understand new modes of government in response to climate change, and he suggests that ‘government’ is an ad hoc assemblage where management is done in ‘diverse sites and practices in a piecemeal and contingent way in response to a dynamic and changing world’ (p.51). Lee (2014), in examining the creation of urban life in Singapore, argues that the ‘urban experience’ is objectified and transformed into targets and regulations that can be quantified. He suggests that urban planning guidelines are political technologies that ‘open a window into a middle layer of urban governance’ (2014, p.142).

In a similar way to these understandings of the urban dispositif, I see the library as an array of various material and non-material elements that are assembled in a contingent way; not co-ordinated and planned from a higher state authority but rather a collection of objects, technologies and discourses. This research involved the investigation of a number of these elements: librarians who hold authoritative positions, acting as representatives of both the library profession and the local municipality; reports and policies produced by libraries and councils, all of which hold a material power and act on the way library spaces and collections are developed; and the spaces of and furniture in the libraries themselves, the physical and material elements of the library that are integral to the way users experience the library.

Data collection was, therefore, an examination of these various elements. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with librarians, in the view of examining their roles in the construction of the library. Semi-structured interviews were also held with library users to probe the way the library is used and explore the links between cultural capital, reading and library use. Reports, policies and other documents were examined as devices that bear upon library operations. Photographs were taken of the physical library and they are used throughout the thesis as visual representations of some of the material elements of the library dispositif.
Furthermore, an important aspect underlying this research was the position of the library as a node in governmental and reading infrastructure; the socio-historic context of Australia in the twenty-first century not only affected the research questions that were developed but it enabled this research. Burawoy (1998) suggests an interview is a social context, embedded in other contexts, which all create meaning independently of the questions asked. The questions I asked library user participants highlight this point. The questions about reading habits, tastes, and library use were made possible due to existing reading infrastructure allowing reading lives to flourish. Australia’s high literacy rates and levels of education that meant reading and visiting a library could become simple acts of everyday life, and the open and accessible nature of the public library resulted in permission to interview librarians and library users being obtained without major bureaucratic hurdles. This context shaped the questions and answers of this research—in the interviews and in the research more broadly.

2.1 The Research Process

2.1.1 Developing the research question

The formulation of the research question formally began in 2012, but the questions around libraries and reading had been on my mind for a longer period. In 2008, I researched the state of independent bookshops in Sydney and examined the impact of rationalisation and consolidation in the book retailing industry (Li, 2008, 2010), and my interest in reading infrastructures began there. The questions around public libraries, and their role as part of reading infrastructures and as public spaces, were sparked during the period of high-profile media commentary about library closures and funding cuts to councils in the UK in 2011. Galletta suggests that research questions are formulated from immersion in and knowledge of existing literature:

Your review of current knowledge about your topic of interest is also influenced by dimensions of your experience, including your autobiography and your understanding of the research context. (2013, p.11)

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28 I worked in the UK in 2011, and was undertaking fieldwork on the Isle of Wight on a day when protesters marched by, demonstrating against the proposed closure to the town library.
Her comments align with Warren and Karner’s (2010, p.130) observation that ‘Many interview researchers, like ethnographers, select topics because of some biographical connection’. These ideas accurately depict my experiences in crafting this research and the formulation of the research questions.

When I returned to Australia in 2012 and began this research, I initially started with a period of background reading on the history of libraries, the present state of public libraries in Australia, and various theoretical models that could frame the research. The two main threads of theoretical interest were governmentality theory, particularly as it related to the development of the free public library in countries like the UK, US and Australia, and cultural capital theory and how it related to reading practices and tastes. My point of enquiry linked closely to the debates I was following around the relevance of public libraries and the impact of budget cuts in the UK and US and drew on my previous research and background as an urban geographer. I was concerned with how libraries were being used, by whom, and the role of books and reading in the contemporary public library.

The initial research question related to cultural capital and library users and was concerned with how cultural capital was expressed in the reading tastes and library habits of different library users. The focus of these questions was the construction and use of public libraries, particularly their spaces and collections. These questions were used to develop two interview guides, one for librarians and one for library users, which are reproduced in Appendix E.

Galletta (2013) observes that in qualitative research, data analysis and data collection occur simultaneously, as thematic patterns emerge during data collection. This occurred during the data collection phase of this research, and as data was collected and analysed, the research focus shifted from cultural capital to concerns around the governmental roles of the library. The importance of the local council became more evident, and the way the institution of the public library fit within broader governmental frameworks as well as reading and book networks became a more prominent theme. Cultural capital remained an important theoretical instrument, but it became one just one theoretical tool rather than the overarching framework. These new themes formed the base of the research questions that structure this thesis, and ultimately this thesis seeks to answer the following question:

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29 Cultural capital is most evident in chapter seven, in a discussion of readers and reading.
How is the public library constructed and positioned as one node of both governmental infrastructure and reading infrastructure?

This question can be further broken down:

1. How are the material elements of the library—space, furniture, books—arranged for discipline and regulation?
2. How is the collection developed as method for influence, and what are the forces that shape the collection?
3. How does the positioning of the library as a community space by councils and library practitioners fit within the governmental role of the library and the library as a dispositif?
4. At a time when the focus in libraries is on collaborative space and new technologies, where is the reader and the book in the library?
5. How might cultural capital theory fit within the framework of the library as a dispositif to understand reading tastes and habits of library users?

These questions are addressed in the remainder of this thesis. At its core, this research is about exploring the way libraries were created and used, and its position as a public reading space within the contemporary city. It was with that in mind that the research methods were developed.

2.1.2 Selecting libraries

The initial stage of the research involved creating a list of public libraries in Sydney that would be suitable study sites. Based on the background reading I had completed, I expected library size and characteristics of the population served to affect library policies, programs and collections and thus aimed to select libraries of varying sizes from a range of socio-economic areas. From the research questions around the geography of library locations and the impact of cultural capital on library use and reading taste, I identified numerous issues of interest such as educational attainment, occupation and class background of the library users.

One discursive element of the library dispositif is statistics and data. Information on metrics such as circulation, event attendance, size population served and staffing is collected by
the State Library of NSW (SLNSW) from every public library service in NSW annually, and are disseminated in reports available from the SLNSW website. These statistics are used by libraries for the planning, development and management of library services. In selecting potential field sites, I used the SLNSW’s 2009/2010 report, Public Library Statistics, and compiled a list of public libraries in Sydney, ranking them by circulation figures. Approach letters (reproduced in Appendix A) were sent to the three libraries with the highest circulation figures and the three libraries with the lowest circulation figures\(^\text{30}\). I also used Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data to compile a list of Sydney Local Government Areas (LGAs) by household income, and sent approach letters to libraries in the three highest income-earning LGAs and the three lowest income-earning LGAs. Additional letters were sent to libraries in the mid-range of both lists. In total, letters were sent to managers of sixteen libraries.

Nine of the sixteen librarians contacted agreed to meet with me, and meetings were held over June and July, 2012. At those meetings, we discussed my research plan, the details and systems of the library, and what I would be permitted to do in terms of accessing documents and records and interviewing staff and library users. From those meetings, and keeping in mind the issues around social and geographic diversity, I selected three libraries to study in greater detail: Whitlam Library in Cabramatta, Narellan Library, and Lane Cove Library.

### 2.2 Case studies

Case studies enable in-depth exploration of various issues and questions that face contemporary public libraries in Australia. Case study research typically refers to research that involves selecting a few examples of a phenomenon to analyse (Hammersley and Gomm, 2000), with the resulting data typically analysed qualitatively. Yin describes a case study as ‘an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context’ and which relies on multiple sources of evidence and variables of interest (2009, p.18). Gerring remarks that in-depth knowledge of one example can be more useful than a more fleeting look at many examples: ‘We gain better understanding of the whole by focusing on a key part’ (2007, p.1). In this research, I chose to study in detail three different public libraries to gain deeper understanding on how libraries were developed, used and perceived, rather than undertake a

\(^{30}\) The libraries contacted in the initial stages of the research are shown in Appendix B.
broad survey of libraries in general, as that would not allow me to uncover fine-grain detail about libraries and, especially, library users.

Case studies offer accessibility. Donmoyer argues that case studies can transport the reader to a location or situation they may not have otherwise had access to—they allow the reader to view the world through the researcher’s perspective and ‘in the process to see things we otherwise might not have seen’ (2000, p.63). Yin explains the potential benefits of case studies even more directly, writing that they allow researchers to ‘retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events’ (2009, p.4). While they may not always be generalisable, case studies give the researcher the ability to capture the complexity and messiness of situations and structures that are not necessarily always neatly bound or defined.

For the most part, public libraries follow a template. There are reports and guidelines that offer suggestions and standards for public library spaces, collections and services (Australian Library and Information Association, 2012; State Library of New South Wales, 2012). There is a standard, recognisable structure to public libraries in Australia which means the results from a case study method can be generalised to Australian public libraries more broadly. But libraries are also individual and specific to the communities they serve, and their spaces, collections and services will depend on numerous factors.

Libraries vary depending on the socio-demographic profile of the local population, the size of the population served, the philosophies of library management, the support and policies of the local council, and even the designers and architects of the library building itself. The libraries studied in this research are what Gerring (2007) refers to as both typical and diverse cases: they are, generally, typical of a contemporary public library in Australia, but they also each have characteristics that make them distinct, as I explore more in the following chapter.

These libraries were selected therefore as both representative of a typical contemporary Australian public library but also as institutions firmly embedded within local geographies. Whitlam Library and Lane Cove Library are both central libraries (as opposed to branch libraries) and Narellan Library in a unique system that does not operate under the ‘central and branch’ method but is in a situation where both libraries in the council are considered equal. Further, they were selected for practical reasons: each library granted permission for interviews to be conducted with staff and library users, and offered access to pertinent documents, policies and records.
2.3 Semi-Structured Interviews

Across the three case study libraries, fourteen librarians and thirty library users were interviewed between March 2013 and September 2013. An additional three interviews were held with librarians at each library in late 2014, as a shift in research focus necessitated further information from librarians. All interviews were semi-structured, held in a library, and later transcribed.

Semi-structured interviews were selected as the primary research method for several reasons. First, the interviews were a tool for capturing and exploring discourse; a way to interrogate one element of the dispositif—the librarians and library users are actors within the library, and the way they relate to and connect with other elements of the library is a key part of the library, as the dispositif is not only about the individual elements but the relations between them. The interviews allowed me to probe these connections. Second, they allowed me to fill a gap in information that observation alone would not have achieved. Third, interviews provided respondents with an opportunity to reflect on their experiences and expand on their stories. Conducting interviews in the structured world of the library also allowed me to explore in greater depth the rationale behind what is visible: the collections, spaces, and events.

2.3.1 Interview Respondents: Librarians

Interviews were conducted with fourteen librarians across the three libraries\(^\text{31}\). The initial contact librarian, who was in all three cases relatively high in the management hierarchy, suggested other librarians in their library service I could interview. This indicates one way that discourse is produced and highlights the importance of the connections and hierarchies between actors in the library. Management structures had to be negotiated, and it was a particularly targeted approach: it was not any library staff member I wished to interview, but rather those who had a level of authority and were in positions that allowed them to divulge information related to my questions.

Crang (2005) warns against the assumption of researcher ignorance and informant knowledge, stating that although there is growing recognition of interviews as ‘coconstructions of knowledge’ between interviewer and interviewee, ‘there is still often a sense of seeking insider knowledge’ (Crang, 2005, p.227). A similar sentiment is raised by McDowell (1998) in her writing.

\(^{31}\) Five librarians were interviewed from the Fairfield Library Service (Whitlam Library), five from the Camden Library Service (Narellan Library, with one from Camden Library), and four from the Lane Cove Library Service.
about interviewing elites, and she explains a question faced by researchers: whether to present themselves as ignoramus or expert. In the research she was conducting, her expertise lay in geography and social science; the bankers she was interviewing had expertise in a different area. She acknowledged that the way she presented herself in interviews varied according to whom she was interviewing, and, for example, she would be more assertive and well-informed with younger male interviewees, ‘play dumb’ with older male respondents, and be more ‘sisterly’ towards women in a similar age cohort.

In the interviews I conducted with librarians, the knowledge and discourse was co-produced by the interviewer and interviewee. There was an element of researcher ignorance and informant knowledge; I asked questions about the librarians’ job role and their perspectives on various issues related to libraries, books, and reading. The interview guide for librarians was developed from the theoretical research questions outlined in Appendix E and focused on obtaining information not easily accessible through publicly published material, and particularly information about the specific library. The areas in which I was ignorant related to the specificity of the case: the relationship between the library and the council, the way the particular library worked with bookshops, library suppliers and publishers, the rationales behind collection development at the individual library, and the librarian’s own experiences of working in that library.

But I was not entirely ignorant in the interview, and it was not simply a case of the expert (the librarian) divulging information. I knew the background of my own research and the theoretical frames from which the questions were derived, and I also possessed some knowledge about libraries and books through my experience as a library user and reader, and from the background research I had done prior to commencing the interviews. The information obtained in the interviews, derived from the questions asked and answers given, are therefore the result of multiple layers of knowledge from different perspectives.

The information provided by the librarians needs to be seen through a particular lens and context; they are part of a governmental apparatus and were interviewed as employees (and representatives) of the local council authority. Furthermore, they were interviewed as representatives of the library profession, and their comments need to be understood in this context; the interview was a political space with ‘official’ lines and professional faces.

The librarians interviewed held a range of job roles, but all were employed in positions that were related to the research questions about the design of library space, collection development, and the creation of the events program. Following the adjustment in research
focus after most interviews were completed, I conducted additional interviews with some librarians. These related to the library as part of a municipal authority and its position within broader organisational structures and networks.

The librarians were interviewed under the condition of anonymity, and as a result I cannot specifically name the role of each librarian at each library. Generally, I interviewed librarians who were high up on the library’s organisational structure. Each of the three libraries (and the library systems of which they are a part) has a slightly different organisational structure, reflecting differences in size and historical management decisions\(^{32}\). All librarian respondents were classed as librarians\(^{33}\) under the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) work level guidelines (Australian Library and Information Association, 2013) though at varying grade levels.

At Whitlam Library and the Fairfield Library Service, the library manager sits at the top of the management hierarchy, and below that are four co-ordinators such as the community and outreach co-ordinator and the collections and assets co-ordinator (as seen in Figure 2.1\(^{34}\)). At a level below this senior staff team are branch library managers, as well as other specialist librarians such as the youth and children’s librarian and local studies librarian. Most library staff below these senior positions were in ‘cluster around things just like circulation and lending services’ (Librarian O).

\(^{32}\) The organisational structures I discuss in this section are true as of 2013 and 2014, the period during which the interviews were conducted. Two of the library services were restructuring their employment and management hierarchy and as such these descriptions may not be entirely accurate in late 2015, at the time of writing. Regardless, this information reflects the period of fieldwork in this research.

\(^{33}\) As opposed to library technicians, library assistants, or other library staff. The professionalisation of librarianship was discussed more in chapter one, and part of the professionalisation of librarianship has been the clear demarcation of various job roles and work levels.

\(^{34}\) The boxes in blue in these organisational hierarchy diagrams indicate the level on the hierarchy of the librarians interviewed.
Narellan Library and the Camden Library Service is a smaller library service, with just two libraries and no ‘central’ library. The library manager sits at the top of the management hierarchy (as seen in Figure 2.2) and is responsible for the vision and strategic direction of the library. Below the library manager are two team leaders, one at each library. A senior staff team sits below the team leaders, but they do not report to the team leaders and instead report directly to the library manager. This senior staff team includes positions such as the collections services librarian, the youth services librarian, and the community learning librarian. Like Whitlam Library, there are also multiple library technicians and library assistants employed in circulation and lending services roles.
Lane Cove Library similarly has a library manager atop the organisational hierarchy (shown in Figure 2.3). Three section heads sit below the library manager: technical support services, customer and information services, and local studies and archives. Additionally, there are two other librarians who report directly to the library manager—the children and youth services librarian, and the outreach librarian. There are three levels of staff, reflecting the ALIA work level guidelines: librarians, library officers, and library assistants.
The librarians interviewed were all employed in management or senior/specialist staff roles. These were the librarians who had the authority to reveal the most information on issues such as the design of space and the development of the collections. These librarians had direct input and were in some instances decision-makers.

The librarian respondents thus held two roles simultaneously as they were interviewed. They were describing their own personal experiences, but, as I mentioned earlier, they were doing so as employees and representatives of the local council. Furthermore, their position as ‘librarian’ represents a broader professional field, as discussed in chapter one. In seeing the library as a dispositif and an instrument of governmentality, the librarian figure is one agent. Librarians hold a position of authority, enforcing certain rules and regulations and making decisions about the library’s day-to-day operations. This authority is placed on the librarian not only by the employing council but also by broader occupational structures such as professional associations and formal educational processes. Although not all rules and regulations that govern behaviour within the library are set by the individual librarian (and indeed, for the most part, library rules and regulations are set at a council level or an even higher legislative level), they are the figure of authority that upholds rules set by the council authority and broader field of librarianship.

In the context of an interview, it was important to be aware of this role of the librarian as a council representative and actor within a governing instrument. Though the questions I asked were largely uncontroversial, the librarians displayed an awareness of their position as employee and many of the answers were given as though they were answering on behalf of the council. Goffman (1959) suggests that in social interactions, people put on performances—ways of presenting themselves to others. Individuals are playing certain roles, and their performances (behaviours, manners) and the stages on which they are set (front and public stage or back and private stage) all affect the interaction. In these interviews, librarians were presenting a public face, an impression and a narrative that would be acceptable for public dissemination. The knowledge imparted is filtered through this public persona, appropriate to be publicly linked to the library and council.

However, there were moments when some librarians slipped from their public servant persona and revealed opinions they held as individuals, with one librarian respondent labelling one of her comments as ‘off the record’. Many librarians did offer personal opinions, particularly in the discussions about the position of popular fiction in the library, though these were often prefaced with an official ‘line’ of the library being a place free of judgment and censorship. The
most candid comments that were critical of a decision by a library manager came from a librarian who was interviewed as a reader and library user. Catherine, a librarian at Whitlam Library, was interviewed about her own experiences as a reader, and her tastes and library use. As such, she was interviewed with the library user interview guide. However, during her interview, she also spoke about the practices and policies of cataloguing and shelving of romance: she had authority and background knowledge as a librarian which she divulged, perhaps more freely as she was not formally interviewed as a librarian (this interview and respondent is discussed more in chapter five).

2.3.2 Interview Respondents: Library Users

Interviews were also conducted with library users. Librarians and library users are co-located in a proximate space, yet they have different understandings and experiences of the library. The librarian respondents were important sources of information about the production of the library, and were able to share ‘behind the scenes’ information on library functions. Their way of understanding the library would be as a workplace, and their knowledge of the institution would be informed by their training and experience in the field. By contrast, the user experiences the library as a consumer rather than a producer, and as such has different understandings of the institution that, for the most part, are driven by personal experience. Library users were interviewed as a way of exploring how the library is used and perceived by those it was designed to serve.

The way I connected with library user respondents was slightly different to the way I positioned myself in the librarian interviews, and my authority as an interviewer and someone from an academic institution was more overt. However, these interviews were also a practice of co-producing knowledge, as I was seeking information that the participants held regarding their own personal experiences with the library and reading.

Recruiting library users was more complicated than recruiting librarians. I was granted permission to display signs in the libraries, either on noticeboards or at the check-out desk

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35 The library users are all referred to in this thesis by pseudonyms to preserve anonymity. All male user respondents were assigned a traditionally male name that began with the same letter as the first letter of the case study library of which they were a member. For example, a male user who is a member of Lane Cove Library is assigned the pseudonym ‘Lincoln’. All female user respondents were assigned a traditionally female name that shared the same first letter as the library to which they belonged. For example, ‘Natalie’ is a member of Narellan Library.
(reproduced in Appendix Ca), that advertised my research and invited interested library users to contact me. I also had notices placed on the libraries’ websites and/or in their e-newsletters (reproduced in Appendix Cb). Seven of the thirty respondents were recruited through these methods. I also attended events such as storytime and book club meetings, where I explained my research and asked if anyone was interested in participating. Ten respondents were recruited this way. The remaining respondents were approached directly in the library, after I was granted permission to ask library users directly if they would be willing to be interviewed. Users who agreed to be interviewed through this approach were given a form with my contact details and the agreed time and date of the interview—a technique adopted after several users failed to show up for their interviews.

2.3.3 Demographic characteristics of library users

As a qualitative study, the observations I make about library users are not intended to be statistically significant; nor do the library users interviewed constitute a representative sample of Australian public library users, whether in terms of gender, age, educational attainment or ethnicity. This is a sample of users who, for the most part, were avid readers and supporters of their library, demonstrated by their willingness to spend an hour being interviewed about their library usage habits and reading lives. In the end, however, the group of library users interviewed were consistent with demographic trends of public library users across Australia.

Thirty library users were interviewed for this research, ten from each case study library. A detailed summary of these users, their demographic details and their reading tastes is provided in Appendix H. There were 14 male users and 16 female users (the gender split across the three libraries is shown in Table 2.1). This gender split is consistent with the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) findings that females are more likely to use public libraries than males, with 40 per cent of females indicating they had attended a library in the previous twelve months compared to 25 per cent of males (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2008).

36 There were some challenges encountered in the recruitment process. One library user emailed me but never replied to my email thanking her and asking to set up an interview time. Five people did not show up for their interview at the mutually agreed time and place. The ‘direct approach’ method was used as a last resort, and it was surprisingly effective, although there were also a number of rejections in that method, though that is to be expected.

37 This form is reproduced in Appendix D.
Table 2.1 Gender distribution across the three libraries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Library</th>
<th>Female participants</th>
<th>Male participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cabramatta Library</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narellan Library</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lane Cove Library</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The youngest participant was an 18-year-old male in his final year of high school and the oldest an 80-year-old female retired nurse. Users were not asked their age, but some volunteered this information and others were classified into age categories based on their appearance and information revealed during the interviews.

The estimated age distribution of library user participants is shown in Table 2.2. The majority of respondents were between the ages of 30 and 60, which is consistent with general trends of public library use. Public library statistics reveal that in NSW in 2010/11, there were 3.1 million registered library members with a recorded age, of which about 71 per cent were adults aged between 20 and 65. In Australia, there were 9.7 million registered library users with a recorded age, of which about 73 per cent were in this age bracket (Regional Access and Public Libraries, State Library of Queensland, 2013).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Number of respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 30</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30s</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40s</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50s</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60s</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70s</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80s</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.2 Age distribution of library user participants

In terms of educational attainment, the ABS reports that individuals with higher levels of educational attainment are more likely to use public libraries (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2008). This too is consistent in the patterns of educational attainment in the library users interviewed, though with striking contrasts across the three libraries. As seen in the tables in Appendix H, at Lane Cove Library, seven out of ten users had completed university, and one
further respondent intending on attending university (the final year high school student). Of the seven users with a university qualification, one was completing a Master’s degree and one had a Master’s degree, two were completing a PhD and one had a PhD. One had vocational training from a polytechnic institute in New Zealand (similar to a Technical and Further Education [TAFE] in Australia), and one had completed apprenticeships and professional training. The high levels of tertiary education among Lane Cove library users reflect the overall demographics of the area, where the population is highly educated and relatively wealthy (as discussed in chapter three).

At Whitlam Library—more precisely, in the Fairfield Library Service—there was a similarly high proportion of users with tertiary qualifications. Six out of ten had a university degree or were currently studying at university. Two had completed high school, and the remaining two had completed Year 10\(^{38}\). Unlike Lane Cove, these numbers contrast with the overall levels of educational attainment in the Fairfield area, where only 9.2 per cent of the population has a Bachelor or higher degree—compared with 24.1 per cent of people in greater Sydney area who fall into this category (profile.id, 2011a). However, at four out of ten respondents, Whitlam Library had the highest proportion of people without formal education of the three case study libraries. The figure of 60 per cent of users with university qualifications is consistent with ABS figures indicating that people with higher levels of education are more likely to use a library. The library users at Fairfield represent almost a composite of the Fairfield population and library users more generally.

At Narellan Library, only three out of ten participants had completed or were completing a university degree, and a further three had TAFE or other vocational qualifications. Two of the older respondents had completed what might now be considered the equivalent of a university level qualification—one participant in her 70s had been to teaching college and had a career as a primary school teacher, and one participant in her 80s had attended nursing school and worked as a nurse before retiring. A relatively low proportion of residents in the Camden LGA have university qualifications (13.2 per cent compared to 24.1 per cent in greater Sydney), but it does

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\(^{38}\) In NSW, a complete high school education lasts six years, from Years 7 to 12, and students complete the Higher School Certificate (HSC) at the end of Year 12. However, students are also permitted to leave school in Year 10 upon completion of the School Certificate.
have a high proportion of people with vocational training (23.5 per cent compared with just 15.1 per cent in greater Sydney) (profile.id, 2011b).

The ABS reports that people born in English speaking countries are more likely to visit a public library than people born elsewhere (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2008). This was also evident in the library users interviewed. In terms of ethnicity and ancestry, only seven respondents were not from Anglo-Australian backgrounds and of these, four were raised in Australia. The distribution of ethnic backgrounds across the three libraries is also reflective of broader demographic trends. Five out of ten users from the Fairfield Library Service were from non-English speaking immigrant backgrounds (four from Asia and one from Eastern Europe), two out of ten users from Lane Cove had non-English speaking ancestries (one was an international student from China and one had Indian ancestry but was born and raised in Australia), and all ten users from the Camden Library Service had Anglo-Australian backgrounds. Burawoy (1998), in writing about the effects of power in reflexive science and the extended case method, comments on the issue of silencing and not representing all voices. There were groups of library users I was unable to speak with, not intentionally but out of practical considerations. I was unable to speak with library users who spoke only limited English or no English at all, despite them being a significant user group for Whitlam Library. This was due to a lack of foreign language ability on my part, as well as the lack of resources for translation services. Furthermore, I did not speak with anyone who had low levels of literacy but who may have still been a library user, largely because my recruitment materials primarily involved printed material.

2.3.4 Interview Sites

All interviews were held in a public library. Elwood and Martin argue that the ‘interview site itself produces ‘micro-geographies’ of spatial relations and meaning, where multiple scales of social relations intersect in the research interview’ (2000, p.649). Where an interview occurs

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39 Most interviews were held at each of the three case study libraries. However, with the library user interviews, we met at a library that was convenient for the user participant. Some library user participants were members of the library service studied, but their main library was no longer the case study library. Some participants were members of the library services studied and hence saw the notices about my research, but had since moved away and were regular users of a different library service. As such, apart from the three case study libraries, interviews were also held at Campbelltown Library, Strathfield Library, Camden Library, Wetherill Park Library, and Bonnyrigg Library.
affects the way interviewer and respondent relate to each other, how the interviewer contextualises what the respondent says, and what the respondent might feel comfortable saying. Interview sites can imply certain messages about who holds the knowledge, whether it is the respondent who is contributing knowledge (for example, if the interview is held in the office of a manager being interviewed) or if it is the interviewer who holds the position of expert (for example, if the interview is being held in the interviewer’s office).

The interviews conducted in this research were held in various places within the library, and the specific sites were chosen pragmatically rather than consciously based on power relations. The librarians were interviewed either in an office in a communal staff room, or in a public area of the library (either a study room or another quiet area). Library users were interviewed in a quiet location in the library40.

I asked senior librarians questions about library space and each had a different way of interpreting library space, an important material element of the library dispositif. At Whitlam Library, the interview with Librarian A was conducted in her office, and her discussion of the space was supplemented by diagrams and floor plans. At the time of the interview, the library was in the midst of a refurbishment, which involved changing the way collections were shelved. Librarian A spoke about these plans and pointed out the new spaces and shelving on various paper plans. The spaces she described did not yet exist in the physical library, but existed in plans and documents.

At Lane Cove Library, the interview was held in two stages. First, Librarian J, the manager, walked with me around the library and spoke in detail about various design and planning decisions. The current Lane Cove library building is relatively new, having opened in 2010, and Librarian J’s involvement in the planning and design process meant she could speak about the reasoning behind certain decisions. The second stage of the interview was held in her office and supplemented the walking interview. It provided an opportunity to ask more directed questions about reading and collections in the library.

Librarian E from Narellan Library offered yet another way of interpreting space. This interview was conducted in Campbelltown Library (a different library service and municipal

40 Before each interview began, the interviewee was given a participant information statement and asked to sign a consent form, as per the ethics protocol. The participant information statements are reproduced in Appendix F, and consent forms in Appendix G.
authority), since on that day of the interview it was more convenient for her to meet there. As such, her description of the space of Narellan Library was completely from memory without any material prompts.

These three ways of conveying knowledge about space resulted in differences in the level of detail and description that was provided by each librarian. This inconsistency was mitigated by asking several librarians at each library about space and the information about the design and use of library space they provided was, ultimately, fairly similar.

The library user interviews also took place in the library, and there was an advantage of conducting these interviews there in terms of power and spatial relations. It was a setting with which we were both familiar and where we shared common identities as library users. While I had authority as the university doctoral interviewer, and I was the one steering the interview in a way to yield information for my research, the library was a setting that did not intimidate. It was a site we both felt comfortable in and there were no obvious spatial manifestations of power. In all user interviews, we were seated at the same level, either across from each other or next to each other.

Importantly, the library was the subject of the interview itself and this was a way of using a material component of the library dispositif as an interview prompt. Elwood and Martin (2000) suggest that the physical location of the interview affects how respondents see themselves and thus how they answer questions. As the aim here was to question research participants about their identity as readers and library users, the library was a valuable interview site. The respondent and I would both be prompted by the interview setting, and the respondent could point or gesture to the areas of the library he or she was speaking about, or be reminded of particular details as he or she looked around.

The materiality of the space was acknowledged in both the words and actions of the user participants. One participant, Nicole, spoke about the way she uses the library as a meeting space, and mentioned reading while waiting in the area in which the interview was conducted:

*And you can often say, 'I'll meet you in the library.' I do often, and I sit here [the area where we were sitting], pick up the paper or something and read, we're perhaps going for lunch or something.*

One of the questions I asked library users was about their patterns of library use, and the typical route that was followed when they entered the library. Some users, rather than saying, for
example, ‘I first go to the non-fiction section’, would point or gesture to the areas they spend time in. In these situations, the space of the library became an active part of the interview.

2.3.5 Coding and Analysis

The interviews were all digitally recorded and then transcribed, and data analysis occurred throughout the process of interviewing and transcribing (Galletta, 2013). I transcribed 39 of the interviews, and utilised the services of a transcribing company for the remaining seven interviews due to time pressures. I then coded the data with descriptive and analytical codes. Cope explains descriptive codes as those themes and patterns that are on the surface or directly stated by the respondent, and analytical codes as those that reflect a theme that look more deeply ‘into the processes and contexts of phrases and actions’ (Cope, 2010, p.283).

The transcripts were key pieces of data. The interviews were transformed from an interaction between two people, to an aural digital file, and finally a textual form—a form of discourse that is analysed in the remainder of this thesis. After the interviews were transcribed, I initially used NViVo software to code the interviews into themes (‘nodes’) that were primarily based on the questions asked. I then used Google Docs41 to perform a similar task. I created separate documents for each theme or question, and inserted the relevant transcript segments into each file. As I coded, I returned to the literature from which the research questions were drawn, and coding, analysis, reading and writing became an entangled and circular process. Writing was a way of working through ideas and re-engaging with the theory.

The coding followed the interview guide, which related to the relevant literature and research questions. The codes for the librarian interviews focused on questions around collection development, the design of library space, organisation of the collections, and relationships the library had with other educational and reading institutions such as bookshops, schools, and universities. Answers that were given in each interview that related to each question were pulled together and in the end, there were files for each question, theme or node. There was also a code for views on the role of the library, and a separate code for thoughts on popular fiction and its position in the library.

41 Google Docs is an internet-based word processor, and its files are stored and searchable in Google Drive, a cloud-based storage platform. I switched to Google Docs as an alternative to NViVo for coding, as it has tagging, searching, and other features useful for managing raw interview data.
Library user participant interviews were coded in relation to reading and taste, with favourite books, authors, genres, and subjects identified as the initial themes. The library user transcripts were read closely and colour coded for these themes, and their answers for each question were also collated in their own files. I also pulled out the library users’ thoughts on the role of the library and on popular fiction and reading in general.

As the writing and analysis process continued, I realised that governmentality and the library as a state apparatus—and as the everyday site where the state connected with the individual—was a more important notion to the understanding of the library than I had originally anticipated. I returned to the interview transcripts and worked through them again, this time focusing particularly on the use of library spaces and the educational role of reading.

Throughout the writing process, I repeatedly returned to the interview transcripts. The respondents’ words were analysed for what was said, what was *not* said, why they said why they did, and who was saying it: what did the librarian mean when she was explaining that libraries are all about community, and what was her role as a council employee, as I discuss in chapter six? What do this library user’s opinions about non-fiction and reading pleasure reveal about his educational background and possession of literary cultural capital, as I discuss in chapter seven? Sorting the interview data into nodes occurred during one main period, but the analysis of transcripts was an ongoing process.

### 2.4 Visual data

There are two main forms of visual data used in this thesis: photographs and screenshots from websites and various documents such as reports and policies. Photographs are used in this thesis to visually present the space of library buildings\(^{42}\) and engage with various material aspects of the *dispositif* in action. They are used to illustrate the physical components of the library such as space, furniture, objects, as well as the arrangement of these elements. The analysis is of the space portrayed in the photos, rather than a traditional photography analysis focusing on elements such as composition, lighting, and framing.

The ways images structure certain kinds of knowledge embody and reflect power relations, and are never neutral: “They have their foci, their zooms, their highlights, their blinkers

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\(^{42}\) Unless otherwise indicated, photographs used in this thesis were taken by the researcher.
and their blindnesses’ (Rose, 2003, p.213). When using photographs, the context in which the photo was taken needs to be recognised. Photographs do not represent an objective truth, but instead are created in frames with photographic conventions that are complex and meaningful. They are also consumed in particular contexts: ‘viewing photographic imagery is a patterned social activity shaped by social context, cultural conventions, and group norms’ (Schwartz, 1989, p.120).

Like written texts, meaning of visual data is created twice: first, by the creator of the text, and then by the reader or viewer. This point is reinforced by Lister and Wells, who describe photographs as ‘complexly coded cultural artefacts’, where the contexts in which photographs are taken—and the purposes for which they are taken—introduces meaning and inform ways of seeing (2001, p.89). Photographs do not present the truth, but rather a moment in the world, with active decisions made by the photographer in selecting what is in the frame and what is left out.

There is a limit to the imagery that can be evoked through words alone. Photographs may not present the truth, but they are accurate presentations of a segment of the world at a specific moment. Photographs were taken over two days at each of the case study libraries. I obtained permission from the librarians to take photos in the library, and permission was granted with the condition that people would not be in the photo. This highlights the idea that although the library is a public space, it is also a regulated space where there are rules of conduct and behaviour. User privacy is to be respected. Three of the six photo sessions were done before the library opened. As such, the bulk of the photos used in this thesis do not include people or, for that matter, how people use the space.

These photographs only provide a snapshot of each library at one moment in time. The spaces within the library are constantly arranged and rearranged—in large part because library furniture is typically designed for flexibility (such as furniture modules that are on wheels so they can be moved relatively easily). In the time since the photographs were taken at library, some changes have taken place in terms of furniture position and collection shelving; this is a result of the rhythm of the library where spaces, collections, and services are constantly in a state of minor flux. For example, since I took the photos in mid-2013, particularly noticeable changes have occurred in Lane Cove Library, where its physical reference collection has significantly decreased in size as its electronic reference collection grew in size and popularity. The additional space now hosts more study desks, and the paperback fiction collection has moved to a different part of the library.
The other form of visual data used is screenshots from websites and various documents. These are important discursive elements of the library; ways that the council and the library communicates with its users and the wider public. The reports and guidelines from institutions like the SLNSW and the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) act in a similar way to the urban design guidelines examined by Lee (2014), producing systems and standards that structure and influence how public library spaces and collections operate and what they look like. Council reports and strategies also hold material power as devices used by the municipal authority to communicate a brand and a vision.

Conclusion

The public library is a heterogeneous assembly of discourses, practices, regulations, spaces, objects and people. This research, as a study of the public library as an institution, involves not only the investigation of the whole but also an examination of its constituent parts. Framing this research is the question of how the library is constructed and positioned as part of a city’s reading and governmental infrastructure. This chapter outlined the methods used in exploring this question: case studies of libraries that are both diverse and typical of public libraries in NSW; semi-structured interviews with librarians and library users that produce discourse in a textual form; and the use of photographs and other visual data to engage with various discursive and material elements of the dispositif.

Research is not a case of an objective, impartial researcher who enters a milieu to uncover a single truth, a coherent and explicit answer to one clear question. Researcher bias was obvious in this case. England understands reflexivity to be the ‘analytical scrutiny of the self as researcher’ (1994, p.82; emphasis in original). She argues that the researcher is an instrument within the research itself: the researcher’s biographical details affect the fieldwork, and the power relations between the researcher and the researched. I entered this research project as an avid reader and regular user of libraries, believing that libraries are important and necessary public institutions. My own bias was further reinforced as I conducted interviews with librarians and library users—a self-selecting sample of people who read books, used libraries, and who were willing to spend an hour talking with a stranger about the way they used libraries and the books that they read.

Several strategies were used to mitigate these subjectivities. First, interviews were held with a range of people. In terms of librarians, interviews were conducted with librarians at
various stages in their careers, and who held different job roles, which provided a range of
perspectives on broader questions such as what they believed to be the role of the library.
Second, a range of library users from various demographics were also interviewed. These were
people who used the library in different ways, including some who identified as non-readers.
Third, different sources of information were utilised, such as online blogs, which may yield
information that librarians might be reluctant to share in an interview, and reports and other
documents which provide additional layers of meaning about the library as an institution. These
strategies ensured that a range of opinions were represented (and not only fervent supporters of
libraries and avid readers), and findings were grounded in current statistics. In the following
chapter, I discuss this information in relation to each of the three case study libraries and their
municipalities in greater detail.
Chapter 3
Libraries and municipal governance in Sydney

Introduction

Public libraries are embedded within local contexts, part of what Joyce terms the ‘mundane state’ in liberal governance (2013, p.3). They are institutions within local municipal authorities, and their operations, spaces and locations are influenced by the social and geographic characteristics of the municipality. In this chapter, I examine the local characteristics and socio-economic profiles of the three case study libraries and the suburbs in which they are located. Statistics are important for classification and counting, for objectively knowing a population enables liberal governance (Joyce, 2002). Joyce writes, of the nineteenth century British libraries, ‘knowing one’s society, amongst other things, involved knowing the statistics that enabled one to know its true form. Those involved in the library movement were keen compilers of and advocates for statistics’ (Joyce, 2003, p.130). In managing a population, one must first have to know it.

This data forms an important part of the library dispositif, used to know and govern the population. A key part of this chapter, and indeed this thesis, is the relationship between the library and the municipality. Otter argues that before municipal authorities in nineteenth century Britain, there was little co-ordinated management of infrastructures in the city. Municipal authorities were formed in the 1830s—more liberal, elected and representative administrative bodies that could pass legislation and govern the population (Otter, 2008). Public libraries form part of these infrastructures under municipal power, and this chapter is an exploration of both the data used by municipal authorities in planning libraries as well as the relationship between the library and the municipal authority.

The purpose of this chapter is, therefore, twofold. First, the data presented is what is used by councils and librarians when they are planning and managing the library, which will offer insight and background into how library services are created and the link between the library and the municipality. Second, it provides a geographic and socio-demographic context to the discussion in the remainder of this thesis. Librarian A from Whitlam Library, when she explained that most public libraries have eighty per cent of their collections that are the same other public libraries, said, ‘Because your general brief is to meet the general interests of your general community, so generally
This chapter looks at the local characteristics of each library to provide context for the discussion on the specifics that follows. I begin with a brief overview of the social geography of Sydney. I then examine each case study library and municipality more closely, looking at the socio-economic characteristics of each and how they affect the provision of library services.

3.1 The social geography of Sydney, Australia

Greater Sydney\(^{43}\) has a population of 4.76 million (as of June 2013; Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2014a), covers 12,368 square kilometres and is comprised of 43 local councils (City of Sydney, 2014). These statistics, however, do not convey the various understandings of the city that exist in the imaginations of its inhabitants and visitors. Multiple regions exist within the city (as seen in Figure 3.1) with distinct social, cultural, and economic profiles.

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\(^{43}\) The Greater Capital City Statistical Area as defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).
Multiple factors contribute to the differences across the city such as changes in economic structure and immigration patterns. In terms of economic restructuring, deindustrialisation and decline in manufacturing, coupled with the growth of the new services sector, transformed the economic and social base of the city from the mid twentieth century (Fagan, 2000; Randolph and Holloway, 2005).

Fagan reports that between 1970 and 1985, almost 180,000 jobs were lost from the manufacturing sector in Sydney and manufacturing workers dropped from 24 per cent of the workforce in 1970 to 17 per cent in 1985. The geographic impact was pronounced. The old manufacturing suburbs in western and south-western Sydney saw their industries and employment bases become obsolete, and these areas typically have low levels of employment, income, and wealth, with high proportions of people employed in vulnerable occupations or ‘old economy’ jobs of manufacturing and production (Baum et al., 2005).

In the same period, there was growth of ‘new economy’ jobs in the financial and services sector, particularly after the deregulation of the Australian dollar in 1983. Foreign investment entered Australia rapidly, particularly in the areas of property development, real estate, and
financial services. The money and investment that went into Sydney in this period followed a particular geographic trajectory (Daly and Pritchard, 2000). The key sites of this new industry were the CBD, North Sydney, and business park developments such as in North Ryde.

Immigration patterns have also had an important effect on Sydney. Before World War II, Sydney had a predominantly Anglo-Australian population, though there were pockets of other ethnic groups throughout the city. In the post-war years, Sydney saw significant migration from Greece, Italy and Malta, and these immigrants settled in the inner western suburbs (Burnley, 2000). After 1973, chain migration and the liberalisation of immigration selection policy saw more Lebanese immigrants join the smaller long-established Lebanese communities. Refugee status and humanitarian concerns were a key part of the new policies, and facilitated influxes of refugees from Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia in the 1970s. Many of these refugees settled in the suburbs of Western Sydney, such as Cabramatta, Fairfield, and Liverpool (Burnley, 2000; Dunn, 1993, 1998).

The impacts of economic restructuring and immigration are visible across the city and have shaped the regions in which the three libraries studied are located. Whitlam Library is in Cabramatta, southwest Sydney, an area affected by the decline of manufacturing and home to many refugee migrants who arrived in the 1970s. Narellan Library is in the South West Growth Centre of Sydney, an area that has been released for housing development (NSW Government Planning and Environment, n.d.) and is a rapidly growing area. Lane Cove Library is situated on the lower north shore, in the Ryde region in Figure 3.1, a wealthy region of the city both currently and historically. Figure 3.2 shows the location of the council areas in which each of the three libraries are located.

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44 In more recent years, the biggest migrant groups in Sydney have been from the UK, China, India, and New Zealand (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2014b). The most recent Census figures from 2011 indicate the migrants from the UK and New Zealand typically settled in Central Sydney, the northern beaches, and the eastern suburbs, while Chinese and Indian migrants tended to settle in Western Sydney where there were established ethnic communities.
Table 3.1 illustrates some of the key differences between each of the council areas of these libraries. The contrast between the council areas in terms of income, employment, and ethnicity is clear. Fairfield City has a large population of culturally and linguistically diverse people, while households generally have low income; Camden Council has a high Australian-ancestry population with low levels of immigration; and Lane Cove Council is an area of typically high-skilled people and high household incomes. The remainder of this chapter explores these characteristics and differences, and the impacts these have on libraries.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fairfield City Council (Whitlam Library)</th>
<th>Camden Council (Narellan Library)</th>
<th>Lane Cove Council (Lane Cove Library)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Largest Ancestry</strong></td>
<td>Vietnamese (16.6%)</td>
<td>Australian (41.1%)</td>
<td>English (32.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main language spoken at home</strong></td>
<td>Vietnamese (19.1%)</td>
<td>Italian (1.5%)</td>
<td>Cantonese (3.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Limited English Proficiency</strong></td>
<td>20.4%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weekly household income</strong></td>
<td>$400-$599 (10.8%)</td>
<td>$1500-$1999 (14.3%)</td>
<td>$2500-$2999 (14.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Highest education qualification achieved</strong></td>
<td>No qualification (60.3%)</td>
<td>No qualification (45.6%)</td>
<td>No qualification (27.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bachelor or higher degree (9.2%)</td>
<td>Bachelor or higher degree (13.2%)</td>
<td>Bachelor or higher degree (45.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main industry of employment</strong></td>
<td>Manufacturing (17.8%)</td>
<td>Manufacturing (11.1%)</td>
<td>Professional, scientific, and technical services (18.1%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1 Socio-economic characteristics of the three council areas

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45 Excluding English
46 Speaks another language and English not well or at all
47 Most common income bracket

82
3.2 Fairfield City Council and Whitlam Library

Prior to the establishment of a library in Fairfield\(^{48}\), there were School of Arts institutions in the area: an alderman elected to council in 1900 thought a School of Arts should be established, and an alderman who was on the council between 1920 and 1922 was reported to be a member of the committee of the local school of arts (Donald, 2013)\(^{49}\). The first discussions about establishing a library seemed to have occurred in 1945, when Alderman Wingrave moved that the council consider a report by the town clerk setting out the conditions by which a public library could be established. The *Library Act 1939* was eventually adopted in April 1949, and the Fairfield Municipal Library officially opened in the old council chambers on the 7th of October, 1950.

\(^{48}\) Fairfield LGA was originally two separate municipalities. The District of Smithfield and Fairfield was proclaimed in December 1888, and it became known as the Municipality of Fairfield in 1920. The other municipality, Cabramatta and Canley Vale, officially became a municipality in 1892 after separating from the municipality of Liverpool (George, 1991; Pittard, 1990). The two municipalities amalgamated in 1948. The City of Fairfield, as the municipality is now known, was proclaimed in 1979 amidst more general changes to government structures (Pittard, 1990).

\(^{49}\) The history of Fairfield City Council’s library service was the most difficult to trace out of the three libraries studied. As it lacked a published history, I used a range of sources, some of which were not explicitly about the library but merely mentioned the library in passing.
By the late 1960s, the central library had outgrown its premises and architect Harry Seidler was commissioned to design a new library. This was a time when the modernist movement was exerting its influence on architecture, including through the design of library buildings in Australia and elsewhere (Black, 2011; Black and Pepper, 2012; Nichols et al., 2010). Construction of the new library began in 1974, and Russell Doust, the State Librarian of NSW at the time, commented: ‘Librarian says (and I agree) that there must be a proper central library which not only functions as a library, but also looks like a building of real importance to the community (which it is)’ (Doust, 1974, p.404). His remark reflects some key principles behind modernism and Seidler’s style of architecture that brings together geometry, landscape, and functional and aesthetic needs of a building⁵⁰ (Goad, 2014; Hartoonian, 2011; Sharp, 1997).

The new library opened in October 1975, and in 1982, was renamed the Whitlam Library in honour of Gough Whitlam, a resident of Fairfield and the Prime Minister of Australia from 1972 to 1975. Renovations occurred in 1991, with the addition of a second storey. The second storey was officially opened in 1993, with the next set of major refurbishments not occurring until 2013.

Currently, the Fairfield City Council Library service consists of a main branch at Whitlam Library in Cabramatta, which is the largest in terms of physical space and collection size, and where the main administrative and managerial tasks are undertaken. Additional branch libraries are located in Fairfield, Bonnyrigg, Wetherill Park, and Smithfield, as indicated in Figure 3.4. This is the clearest example of a library system as a networked infrastructure: a capillary system with distributed flows of knowledge and resources from a central node to the peripheries.

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⁵⁰ Sharp describes a distinctive feature of Seidler’s work: ‘His key to form has always been geometry, an ordering process through which he has sought to create varied but regular forms from building elements’ (1997, p.11). He contends that Seidler had grasped the significance of modernist architecture for Australia and exploited the natural elements in his designs with strong lines and geometric frames.
The Bonnyrigg and Wetherill Park branches are both located in shopping complexes. The entrance to the Bonnyrigg branch is adjacent to the entrance of Bonnyrigg Plaza, a mid-sized shopping centre that features two supermarkets, a discount department store, and various food and specialty retailers. The Wetherill Park branch is located across an outdoor carpark from the Wetherill Park Stockland Town Centre, a similarly sized shopping centre. Both library premises are owned by the shopping centres and the council pays nominal rent as part of development agreements. The position of these two branches highlights a broader trend towards locating libraries in commercial spaces. The presence of libraries in these commercial spaces is often the result of negotiations between local councils and developers, where developer contributions to the library are part of a larger commercial project. The co-location of civic and retail functions means such spaces act as kind of public square where the separation between public and private is increasingly blurred.

The local council employs the staff of the Fairfield Library Service, provides the majority of the service’s funding, and makes major policy decisions relating to the library service. The Library Manager reports to a Group Manager and any major policy decisions must be approved by the council. These include policies and decisions such as collection development, membership and lending, and opening hours. As an institution that is part of the municipality, it is important to understand the geographic context in which it operates and the characteristics of the population governed by this arm of the state.
Whitlam Library is in Cabramatta in central western Sydney, part of the Fairfield LGA. It has a culturally and linguistically diverse population and high socio-economic disadvantage, which both influence the way library services are managed and delivered. On the Socio-Economic Index for Areas (SEIFA), which measures relative disadvantage based on a range of Census statistics, Fairfield received a score of 854.0, making it the third most disadvantaged LGA in NSW and the most disadvantaged LGA in Sydney (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013a; profile.id, 2011c).
In 2011, the three largest ancestries in Fairfield City were Vietnamese, Chinese and Australian. Seventy per cent of the population spoke a language other than English at home, with the top languages being Vietnamese, Assyrian/Aramaic, Arabic, and Cantonese. The level of English proficiency was low, with one fifth of the not speaking English well or at all, as seen

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cabramatta (suburb)</th>
<th>Fairfield City Council</th>
<th>Greater Sydney</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Largest ancestry</strong></td>
<td>Vietnamese (30.3%)$^{51}$</td>
<td>Vietnamese (16.6%)</td>
<td>English (25.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main language spoken at home (excluding English)</strong></td>
<td>Vietnamese (37.0%)</td>
<td>Vietnamese (19.1%)</td>
<td>Arabic (4.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speaks English only</strong></td>
<td>11.6%</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
<td>62.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Limited English proficiency$^{52}$</strong></td>
<td>36.7%</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weekly household income (most common income bracket)</strong></td>
<td>$400-$599 (13.2%)</td>
<td>$400-$599 (10.8%)</td>
<td>$1500-$1999 (11.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Household income quartile (most common bracket)</strong></td>
<td>Lowest group (46.2%)</td>
<td>Lowest group (37.3%)</td>
<td>Highest group (30.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bachelor degree or higher achieved</strong></td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No formal qualifications</strong></td>
<td>65.7%</td>
<td>60.3%</td>
<td>40.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vocational training</strong></td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main industry of employment</strong></td>
<td>Manufacturing (26.3%)</td>
<td>Manufacturing (17.8%)</td>
<td>Healthcare and social assistance (10.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Household internet access$^{53}$</strong></td>
<td>56.5%</td>
<td>67.6%</td>
<td>76.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.2 Cabramatta (suburb) and Fairfield City Council socio-economic profile (data from profile.id 2011d)$^{54}$

$^{51}$ The percentage refers to percentage of the population of the area indicated by the column that fits in the category indicated by the row. In this instance, 30.3% of people in Cabramatta have Vietnamese ancestry.
$^{52}$ Does not speak English well or at all.
$^{53}$ Including all types of internet connections.
$^{54}$ Demographic statistics for all three case study sites are from profile.id, a website that provides demographic profiles of LGAs in Australia using Census data.
in Table 3.2. This contrasts with only 5.8 per cent of people in Sydney and 3.0 per cent in Australia who reported a low level of English proficiency.

The population in Fairfield has, overall, achieved relatively low levels of formal education. Education levels are an important indicator of socio-economic status, given the impact of education levels on employment and income opportunities. The main industries of employment in Fairfield are relatively low skilled and low paying, with 17.8 per cent of the population employed in manufacturing (compared with 8.5 percent in greater Sydney) and 11.5 per cent in the retail trade (9.8 per cent in greater Sydney). Fairfield City has more people in the lowest quartile income group than any other LGA (calculated by assuming that all households were the same size, known as ‘equivalised income’).

Cabramatta has characteristics similar to Fairfield, though the disadvantage is even starker. Cabramatta has a higher proportion of its population speaking a language other than English at home, and more people with limited English skills. It also has a lower proportion of the population with higher education and a higher concentration of people working in low-skilled industries.

Cabramatta has a higher proportion of households in the lowest income quartile (47 per cent). Further, internet access is relatively low in Cabramatta. A third of households have no internet connection at all and only half have a broadband connection. These figures underscore the importance of the library in this area in terms of providing disadvantaged populations with access to material in their native language, offering support for English literacy and conversation, and providing internet.

Waller examined information practices in Australian households and highlighted the importance of the library for non-internet users, which often included more disadvantaged groups: ‘The Internet is such a taken-for-granted part of many people's lives that some researchers tend to forget that not everyone can access the Internet’ (2013, p.71).
3.2.1 Library Place and Space

Figure 3.5 Location of Whitlam Library; Railway Parade, Cabramatta, NSW (Source: Urban Research Centre, University of Western Sydney, 2015)
Whitlam Library is located on Railway Parade in Cabramatta, just north of the train station (see Figure 3.5). It is close to the retail precinct of John and Hughes Streets, next to a community centre, and one block away from a Police Citizens Youth Club (PCYC). The central location and its proximity to the train station and buses allow for easy accessibility\(^{56}\).

The building itself is two storeys. From the outside, it is grey and angular with a sculptural piece of signage announcing its status as a library (Figure 3.6). The foyer has a curved wall on the left leading into the library and the circulation desk (Figure 3.7), the geometry of which is a distinct feature of Seidler’s work. A sign above the circulation desk welcomes visitors in multiple languages, indicative of the culturally and linguistically diverse population served (Figure 3.8).

\(^{56}\)A feature of many public libraries, and certainly the ones I visited during this research, is an easily accessible location, particularly for those without private car access.
The ground floor of the library houses the children’s library, a lounge area, and the fiction, leisure non-fiction, and Languages Other Than English (LOTE) collections. These
sections are physically separated into different spaces with various themes: the children’s library is decorated with a jungle theme, the fiction room represents the desert, and the non-fiction and LOTE room has an ocean theme. The first floor contains two meeting rooms, more study desks, and the local history, reference, ‘academic’ non-fiction collections. This configuration of space was in the process of changing during this fieldwork, with refurbishment taking place in 2013.

3.2.2 Library Resources and Services

Resources and services provided by libraries can be broadly divided into three categories: books and other informational material; classes, programs, and events; and space.

The collection at Whitlam is referred to as a ‘floating collection’: library members can borrow books from any branch in the Fairfield Library Service, and return the books to any branch. The books then stay at the branch library to which they are returned unless they are requested by a member from a different branch. As such, general discussions around the collection will typically refer to the collection of the Fairfield Library Service, though there are differences between the ‘base’ collections of each branch.

This is particularly evident for the LOTE collection. In describing the differences in LOTE collections between the branches, Librarian A said:

_We’re actually getting rid of some of the languages we have in Cabramatta and sending them to other places. The theory is that this is our main library so we keep everything here and our branches just have what is local to them because we are the resource for the whole service. But we have really poor usage of Italian here, pretty poor use of Polish here, pretty minimal use of Russian._

By ‘getting rid of some of the languages we have in Cabramatta’, Librarian A means moving material in some languages from Whitlam to another branch library within the system where they might get more use.
Figure 3.9 provides a screenshot of the Fairfield City Council website in 2013 showing the language collections held by each branch. This list reflects the demographics of the specific suburbs and users of those libraries. Chapter five discusses the significance of the LOTE collection in greater detail.

The relatively low levels of education and English proficiency in the Fairfield area influence the services and programs provided by the library, which speak to some of the principles of liberal governmentality in terms of producing active and self-governing citizens. English conversation classes are held at Whitlam (Cabramatta), Bonnyrigg, and Fairfield libraries, with four classes a week being held at Whitlam at the time of writing (October 2014). A family literacy program is also provided, which is a ‘free eight week program available to help school children in Years 2 to 6 with reading and writing and to improve their literacy skills’ (Fairfield City Council, 2015). The class is run by a qualified teacher and school reports demonstrating English difficulty need to be provided upon registration. A broader homework help program is offered in the form of ‘yourtutor’, a web-based tutoring service for students in Years 4 to 12 in maths, science, general English, and research and study skills.

Whitlam Library also runs other youth programs. These include ‘Finding My Place’, a series of workshops and speakers for at-risk young people in the local community (discussed
more in chapter six); and Achievers’ Day, where the stories of high-achieving students from schools in the area are collected and archived for the local history collection (Bourke, 2013; Uppal, 2012).

The availability of these programs highlights the role of the library within a broader education nexus: while education may no longer be the primary role of the public library, and instead its provision of space, leisure and entertainment has become a greater focus, education and learning is still central. The librarians at Whitlam see the library as an institution that supports other public institutions such as schools and other local agencies. Librarian A elaborated on this point:

I think the schools do a fantastic job but I think they are really stretched in all ways and particularly communities like this where, you know, Cabramatta Public School for example, up the road, 98% of their kids come from non-English speaking backgrounds. A teacher who’s got a class of 25 or 30 kids, and maybe only two or three of them speak English as a first language and some of them are coming to school not speaking any English at all. You know, their work is cut out for them … let alone they have homework that Mum and Dad can’t help with, they don’t understand perhaps themselves very well. So that’s why we’re really keen on the whole support for homework. … We see it as our role, even though there’s a huge discussion around how it’s not local government’s responsibility.

Her last comment is particularly telling. Strictly speaking, education is not the responsibility of the municipal authority, but the librarians at Whitlam recognise the library as part of a broader infrastructure that involves institutions from other levels of government. The library is part of the council, but there are other drivers for what they do.

Space is another important resource offered by Whitlam Library. Librarian B explained that many of the students and library users at Cabramatta may not have suitable study spaces at home. As the library has longer opening hours than schools do, its space is an important resource for local students. He reported:

So they use our building resources, our seating resources, our air-conditioning resources, so to some extent aspects of how we operate in our environment is perhaps a little bit different compared to other public libraries in terms of the proportion of people who use it like that and not for straight out collections.
This highlights the importance of the library as a public space, not just a place for books. These two resources offered by the library are different components of the library dispositif and reveal ways that statistics and demographic data are used, and also illustrate how the library is positioned as a technology and space of government.

3.3 Camden Council and Narellan Library

The Camden Council Library can trace its beginnings to the mid-nineteenth century (The Council of Camden, 2014). In 1854, a group of residents formed a Magazine Club to keep abreast of news and literature. The Municipality of Camden was not proclaimed until 1889, meaning the first incarnation of the library occurred 35 years before Camden was officially a council, highlighting the independent development of libraries and municipal authorities in Australia. The Magazine Club eventually saw the need for a permanent base and was awarded a government grant to build a School of Arts, which opened in 1866. The council took over the School of Arts building and responsibility for the library in 1930. In 1965, Camden Council and the neighbouring Campbelltown Council established a regional library service and passed the
Library Act 1939. By 1967, the library collection had grown and moved to a different building across the road. In 1976, Camden and Campbelltown Councils split their joint service and started delivering library services separately. In 1981, an additional branch of the Camden Library Service opened in Narellan and the following year, the Camden branch moved back to its original (and present) location.

In 2005, Narellan Library moved into a new building in its current location. Camden Library also underwent refurbishment around this time, reopening in 2007 in a structure that joined the library building with a museum and old fire station building. The refurbishment of the Camden branch is an example of the trend towards colocation of services, and particularly cultural institutions. The preservation of the old fire station building is indicative of a broader push towards recognition and preservation of heritage buildings, a movement that emerged in Australia in the 1970s (Goad, 2014). Now, both Camden and Narellan libraries exhibit modern interiors and offer well-used library services and resources albeit in two quite different buildings.

![Figure 3.11 Camden Council Library service](image)

Figure 3.11 shows the current structure of the library service: two libraries that are characterised as being ‘two sides of the same coin’, without the central-branch relationship typically found in library services.

Camden Council is in the southwest urban fringe of Sydney, in what the NSW Government describes as the South West Growth Centre. The area is being rezoned for urban development and will be serviced by the new South West Rail Link, a heavy rail train line that is to form part of the wider Sydney rail network. Of the eighteen precincts in this growth centre, eleven are located in the Camden LGA (Camden Council, 2014a).

The growth of the area affects the relationship between the local council and the library. Librarian E reported that the library service previously had more autonomy in its decision-making and communication, but that has since changed. The population of Camden LGA is expected to grow from 68,000 people in 2014 to over 212,000 people by 2036 (Camden Council,
and council staff numbers are expected to grow from 400 to 800 in the same period. The council website at the time of writing (February 2015) notes that there are 110 new residents moving into the Camden LGA every week, making it one of the fastest growing LGAs in NSW (Camden Council, 2015). This growth has contributed to restrictions on the library’s autonomy and meant that many more decisions require permission from higher levels of council management.

Librarian E revealed that the main change in the relationship between the library and the council because of the rapid growth has been in communication. Previously, the library could have more ‘conversations with the community without any interference whatsoever’ and speak directly to the media. However, it has lost the option of talking directly to media or to be quoted: ‘It has to come from not just the levels above us, but the levels above that.’ This is to ensure a consistent image is presented from the council, causing the library to be more carefully monitored and governed.

The council also controls library budgets and staffing. Librarian E reported, ‘They control our budget. At the end of the day, that’s the biggest thing that happens’. Furthermore, the library cannot hire a new staff member without a council representative sitting on the interview panel. As far as other aspects of the library such as collection development and event planning (what Librarian E referred to as ‘the stuff the community sees’), there is little interference from the council. Librarian E reported that when it comes to ‘...deciding what books. They don’t want to know. They trust our judgment and our professional thing.’ There is an element of delegation of control and power from the council to the librarians, authority that is granted not only from the organisational structures and stipulations of the Library Act 1939 and Local Government Act 1993, but also from the legitimacy afforded to librarians by nature of their professional identity. This illustrates an important feature of the library dispositif: it is comprised not only of individual elements but rather how they are arranged. The relationship between the council and the library is a key part of the library dispositif; the council and librarians are both elements within it but an even more important aspect of this is how these two elements are arranged and relate with each other.

The relationship between the library and council and the friction that can arise is illustrated by an author event that occurred at the library in 2014. While the public library is often presented as a neutral, apolitical space, politics can sometimes affect its operations. Librarian E spoke about an event where former Prime Minister and leader of the Labor Party
Julia Gillard spoke at the library about her biography, published in 2014 (Camden-Narellan Advertiser, 2014). This was a big event for the library, and drew notice from the council. Librarian E commented that the Camden Council at the time was Liberal\textsuperscript{57}, and there was ‘considerable angst’ about having a former Labor leader speak. She revealed that the event ‘probably put us on the radar’ and ‘now we’re a lot more wary of that. We’re having to check more things.’

The socio-demographic profile of Camden Council, and the suburb of Narellan, has an even stronger influence than council-library relations in shaping the library.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Narellan (suburb)</th>
<th>Camden Council</th>
<th>Greater Sydney</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Largest ancestry</td>
<td>Australian (44.9%)</td>
<td>Australian (41.1%)</td>
<td>English (25.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main language spoken at home</td>
<td>Italian (1.1%)</td>
<td>Italian (1.5%)</td>
<td>Arabic (4.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(excluding English)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaks English only</td>
<td>91.5%</td>
<td>86.3%</td>
<td>62.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited English proficiency</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly household income</td>
<td>$1500-$1999 (14.6%)</td>
<td>$1500-$1999 (14.3%)</td>
<td>$1500-$1999 (11.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(most common income bracket)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household income quartile</td>
<td>Medium highest group</td>
<td>Medium highest group</td>
<td>Highest group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(most common bracket)</td>
<td>(29.5%)</td>
<td>(31.6%)</td>
<td>(30.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor degree or</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>higher achieved</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No formal qualifications</td>
<td>48.5%</td>
<td>45.6%</td>
<td>40.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational training</td>
<td>24.5%</td>
<td>23.5%</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main industry of employment</td>
<td>Retail trade (13.9%)</td>
<td>Manufacturing (11.1%)</td>
<td>Healthcare and social</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>assistance (10.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household internet access</td>
<td>75.9%</td>
<td>81.3%</td>
<td>76.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.3 Socio-demographic profile of Narellan and Camden Council (data from profile.id, 2011e)

\textsuperscript{57} In Australia, the Australian Labor Party and the Australian Liberal Party are the two major political parties.
Camden Council is a small council with a population of 63,248 in 2013 (for comparison, Fairfield City Council had a population of 201,427). It is ranked 22nd out of 153 councils in NSW on the SEIFA index of socio-economic advantage. Its population has relatively high household incomes, and is predominantly Anglo-Australian and English-speaking. The dominant household composition is couples with children, particularly young children.

In 2011, the three largest ancestries in the Camden council area were Australian, English, and Irish, as seen in Table 3.3. The majority of the population only speaks English at home, which is 24 per cent higher than the figure for Greater Sydney. Only 1.2 per cent of the population stated that they do not speak English well or at all, which is lower than the proportion for greater Sydney (5.8 per cent).

There is a high proportion of people with vocational qualifications in Camden Council compared to the greater Sydney average, and relatively lower levels of people with tertiary qualifications. Related to this, the most common industries of employment of Camden’s population are manufacturing (11.1 per cent), retail (11.0 per cent), and construction (9.9 per cent). Nevertheless, household incomes are high. A third of households are in the third income quartile (equivalised income), and 30 per cent are in the highest quartile.

A relatively higher proportion of households in Camden have children. Almost half (45.7 per cent) of the households in Camden are couples with children, compared with just 34.8 per cent in greater Sydney. Furthermore, 24.8 per cent of households are couples with young children (aged under 15), compared with 18.3 per cent in greater Sydney, indicating a high prevalence of young families in the area.

In the Camden Library Service, librarians at both libraries create programs and collect for the two branches simultaneously—for example, the fiction collections librarian is responsible for the fiction collection at both Camden and Narellan. Although it is one library service, with librarians managing the libraries as two halves of one whole, there are differences between the collections, events, and spaces of each library. These differences reflect the population and corresponding needs of the two suburbs. The focus in this research is Narellan Library.

Narellan is a suburb located in the central ward of the Camden LGA, and has an even higher English-speaking, Australian-by-ancestry population than the Camden LGA as a whole. 45.0 per cent of people in Narellan nominated ‘Australian’ as their ethnic and cultural background, which is higher than Camden’s 41.1 per cent. Additionally, 91.0 per cent of the population in Narellan speaks only English at home (compared with 86.3 per cent in Camden).
Narellan has a smaller proportion of people with a university qualification—8.3 per cent have a bachelor degree or higher, compared with 13.2 per cent in the Camden LGA. But relatively more have a higher proportion of people with a vocational qualification: 24.5 per cent of people in Narellan versus 23.5 per cent for the Camden area. The top three employment industries in Narellan are similar to those of the council area: retail trade, manufacturing, and health care and social assistance.

Household composition in Narellan contrasts slightly with the Camden LGA. The most common household type is still couples with children, though this represents only 38 per cent of households (compared with 45.7 per cent in Camden). There are also more single parent families (13.4 per cent in Narellan and 11.2 per cent in Camden) and greater numbers of single-person households (19.6 per cent of households in Narellan compared with 14.1 percent in Camden). The slightly higher proportion of single-parent households and single-person households may explain the higher levels of households in the two lowest quartiles for equivalised household income.

Narellan’s population is typically Anglo-Australian, English-speaking, with relatively low levels of education and employed in relatively low-skilled industries. The household structure is dominated by couples with children, though there are also a high number of households consisting of couples without children and lone-person households. These characteristics are reflected in the services and resources provided by the library, to which I now turn.
3.3.1 Library Place and Space

Figure 3.12 Location of Narellan Library; Elyard Street, Narellan, NSW (Source: Urban Research Centre, University of Western Sydney, 2015)
Narellan Library is opposite the Narellan Town Centre shopping centre, next to the council offices, and on the same street as the offices of the local newspaper, the Camden-Narellan Advertiser. There is also a bus stop at the front of the library. The library is located in the same building as the ARTyCaf, a not-for-profit enterprise that hosts various visual and performance based activities (ARTyCaf, 2011). In Figure 3.13, ARTyCaf is the red building on the right and the library is the building on the left. The entrance to the library is through the glass doors in the centre of the image.

![Figure 3.13 Narellan Library, main entrance](image)

The library is split over two levels, with the main public area on the ground floor, and the private staff offices and a semi-private digital studio—called The Space—on the first floor. The ground floor is a large open-plan space with numerous floor-to-ceiling windows that let in natural light and encourage multiple sightlines and visibility. Like Whitlam Library, the circulation desk is at the entrance and exit of the library, allowing library staff to monitor every person who enters or leaves. In Figure 3.14, the entrance is the glass door on the left of the image, on one side of the circular desk; the exit is on the right, on the other side of the desk; material components of the library dispositif that are used to monitor and influence behaviour.
Farther into the library are a second information desk and a circular computer hub, both visible in Figure 3.15. There are cushioned chairs, bright colours, open space and quieter corners. Meeting rooms and a magazine and newspaper area are located near the front of the library. The children’s and youth areas are at the back of the library. A lounge area is located towards the back, near non-fiction collections that are more suited to browsing such as cooking and craft. The light and openness of the space is evident in Figure 3.15.
The *Camden Council Library Strategic Plan 2003 to 2010* emphasises being a vibrant and welcoming place for the community. In a paper for the library journal *Aplis*, the then-manager of Camden Library Service and manager of community services explained the plan and vision of the library. They described the library as ‘a focal point, a centre of activity and natural meeting place’, comparing it to the village square of the 18th century (Baget-Juleff and Miscamble, 2003, p.156). The positioning of the library as a community space discussed further in chapter six.

### 3.3.2 Library Resources and Services

The resources and services offered by Narellan Library reflect the characteristics of the local population. Baget-Juleff and Miscamble (2003) report that in the library’s strategic plan, Narellan Library was imagined as the ‘technology and ‘how-to’ library’, with its services and resources offered designed to fulfil this role. The Space: Digital Studios is a digital learning centre at the library that focuses on community digital learning. Librarian H, who is responsible for programming the space, described: ‘*I have a small budget which allows me to hire facilitators who are experts in their fields, like video production and editing, sound and lighting, recording studio sessions.*’
includes a music recording studio, a lab with Apple iMac desktop computers for more specialist software workshops, and PC laptops for various other workshops and programs, including workshops on using social media platforms.

The Space: Digital Studios is based on the concept of the Edge at the State Library of Queensland, a collaborative learning and maker space that offers workshops and access to a range of hardware and software (State Library of Queensland, 2014). Narellan Library was mandated to provide quality programs for youth in the area the digital studio occupies, highlighting the municipal role of the library and the governmental use of space. Non-material elements of the dispositif such as regulatory decisions are clear here, as well as how the library dispositif is grounded in a local context where spatiality and other local institutions affect the governance and operations of the library. Librarian E explained:

> The physical space used to be a council/community-organisation-run youth drop-in centre. But that service wasn’t working. So we applied and won the opportunity to turn it into a digital learning space, and one of the provisos was to make sure that we were providing youth services.

The Space is used in the afternoon on school days as a homework centre for high school students. A librarian is available for help with research and reference questions, and the workshops and programs often have a youth focus.

The events program is an important part of the services offered by Narellan Library, a key part of its community engagement. Narellan Library runs a broad range of events and activities throughout the year that do not have an explicit focus on reading. These include a tea cosy competition that runs over several weeks, culminating in a morning tea for the Australia’s Biggest Morning Tea fundraising event (see Figure 5.5 on page 201), and Youth Week activities such as a zombie apocalypse day. Librarian E explained the ethos behind the events that, at first glance, do not have a reading related focus:

> It’s what we’re willing to see as a library event. I don’t know many other libraries that would have a zombie apocalypse as a library event. But we looked at it in terms of, there was an opportunity for one, community engagement, we brought together... We did a makeup workshop, we did research skills on how to get information on what you need to survive, we did filmmaking, a filmmaking workshop and then filmmaking on the day, and we’ll run a video editing workshop as a follow-up to the event. And it was a lot of fun. ... So we’ve got a very broad idea of what a library should be.
The events program, and particularly what Librarian E said about the program, echoes the community focus in the library’s strategic plan and the position of the library as a place for the municipal authority to connect with its citizens (see chapter six). There is an emphasis on engaging with the local population and providing them with spaces and activities that connect them with the library.

3.4 Lane Cove Council and Library

![Figure 3.16 Lane Cove Library, interior](image)
Lane Cove Library is one of the oldest municipal library services in Sydney. Lane Cove Municipal Council was the fifth metropolitan local government authority to adopt the *Library Act 1939* on the 22nd of May, 1945. The library was originally a School of Arts, and in 1945 discussions were held about transferring the library to the council. The Lane Cove Public Library officially opened in 1955, making it the thirteenth metropolitan public library in NSW. The library had a literary focus from the beginning, with the council deciding in 1955 that it should ‘leave the field of light fiction literature to the commercial libraries, and to confine the fiction section of the Municipal Library to books of literary worth’ (Lane Cove Council, n.d.a, p.4). The current library service is comprised of the main library at Lane Cove and a smaller branch at Greenwich, as seen in Figure 3.17.

Lane Cove Library was originally located in the School of Arts building, moving to the site of the old council chambers in 1961. In 1975 the library was extended and modernised, with the junior library relocated upstairs and the staff offices downstairs. In the 1990s, this was reversed and the junior library was moved downstairs to improve access. Discussions about constructing a new purpose-built building began in the 1990s with planning commencing in 2000. However, it was not until 2008 that demolition of the previous library building began, and the current library building officially opened in 2010. The new library is part of the Market Square shopping centre, close to a large supermarket, shops, cafes and eateries, and an outdoor plaza. As with Whitlam Library, the co-location with commercial shops places the library at the intersection of commercial and civic spaces, with an almost interdependent relationship between commercial and civic forces. Librarian J, a senior librarian at Lane Cove Library, explained:
A lot of development that happens uses libraries to anchor developments … if you got a quiet a part of town that’s not getting activity, if you put a library and other council … the library will bring people. If you stick us in a location, if you want to activate a location in an area, we would bring traffic. So that’s why now you see us going into, like I said, retail developments too, with the retailers. And also, obviously they negotiate with council, you know, it’s part of the contribution.

Lane Cove Library was built with financial contributions from the shopping centre developer and the mutually beneficial arrangement is clear: the council received funding for building the library, and the library attracts foot traffic which benefits retailers.

Lane Cove Library fits within Lane Cove Council’s community strategic plan and sits within the Human Services division of the council, highlighting how the library is situated within a larger governmental institution; the library dispositif is grounded in local networks and local contexts. The Library Manager is considered one of the managers of the council, but there is still a chain of command. The Library Manager reports to the Executive Manager Human Services, who then reports to the General Manager of Council. The types of activities that require approval include posters, media communication and certain events. Librarian J gave the example of the launch of the Lane Cove Literary Award: ‘If we have an award, like we had the Literary Award launch … The running order and the speech has to be approved by the Executive Manager … ’cause that’s the message coming out of council.’

The council is also directly involved in budgets and staffing. Fees, charges, and large expenditures need council approval. Librarian J reported, ‘So the RFID [Radio-frequency Identification], I had to get it approved by council, ’cause I didn’t have the money to do it myself.’ Hiring new staff also has council involvement: the library first seeks permission to recruit, then drafts the job advertisement, which is approved by the Executive Manager Human Services, and finally Human Resources gives approval and places the ad. A member of the council staff, external to the library, is required on the interview panel.

Responsibility for other aspects of the library’s operations is delegated to the Library Manager. The council has a broad collection development policy set by its General Manager, while the library has more specific collection development principles and guidelines formulated by the Library Manager. Those principles, and the titles and material that are added to the collection, do not need further council approval where they fit under the broader policy. Librarian J described: ‘Council already has a policy that’s fairly broad but a policy should be broad. You know it’s like legislation, the Act’s broad and regulation’s narrow.’ Council, therefore, plays an important
role in the ‘big’ decisions in running a library, but the more day-to-day activities are influenced by other factors.

Lane Cove Library is located in the Lane Cove LGA, on the lower north shore in Sydney. It is a wealthy area, ranked third of all NSW councils on SEIFA (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2011). The same detail of statistical information as used above to describe Cabramatta and Narellan is not available for the Lane Cove suburb from profile.id; only council wide figures are available. For consistency, I have not used other data published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, as these are not strictly comparable. This choice is also due to the structure of the library service—Lane Cove Library is a significantly larger library in physical space, collection size, and circulation than the Greenwich branch and serves the council area more broadly than the other two case study libraries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Lane Cove Council</th>
<th>Greater Sydney</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Largest ancestry</td>
<td>English (32.0%)</td>
<td>English (25.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main language spoken at home (excluding English)</td>
<td>Cantonese (3.1%)</td>
<td>Arabic (4.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaks English only</td>
<td>74.8%</td>
<td>62.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited English proficiency (speaks another language and English not well or not at all)</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly household income (most common income bracket)</td>
<td>$2500-$2999 (14.8%)</td>
<td>$1500-$1999 (11.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equivalised household income quartile (most common bracket)</td>
<td>Highest group (51.6%)</td>
<td>Highest group (30.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor degree or higher achieved</td>
<td>45.5%</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No formal qualifications</td>
<td>27.2%</td>
<td>40.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational training</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main industry of employment</td>
<td>Professional, scientific, and technical services (18.1%)</td>
<td>Healthcare and social assistance (10.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household internet access (Total internet connection)</td>
<td>75.9%</td>
<td>76.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.4 Lane Cove Council socio-demographic profile (data from profile.id, 2011f)
The population of Lane Cove Council is highly qualified and well educated, as indicated in Table 3.4. This corresponds with Librarian K’s observation that Longueville, a suburb neighbouring Lane Cove, is known as ‘the highest academic per head of population. There [are] more doctors or professors down there than actually doctors at hospitals.’ Residents in the council area tend to be employed in highly skilled industries, with more people working in professional, scientific, and technical services in 2012 than any other sector. The next most represented industry is financial and insurance services, with 10.9 per cent of residents, compared with 6.6 per cent in greater Sydney. Consequently, household income in Lane Cove is high. Around half of households in the council area were in the highest quartile of equivalised household income. Thirty per cent of the population earned $1,500 per week or more (as individuals), compared with 15.4 per cent of people in greater Sydney.

In relation to cultural and ethnic diversity, the Lane Cove LGA displays more cultural and ethnic diversity than Narellan and the Camden LGA, but not to the extent of areas in western Sydney, particularly in Cabramatta and the Fairfield City LGA. The largest ancestries in Lane Cove Council were English, Australian, and Irish, comprising 73.9 per cent of the population. This is higher than the greater Sydney figure of 59.8 percent. Almost three quarters of the population speak only English at home, which again is higher than greater Sydney. Levels of English proficiency are also high, with only 2.4 per cent of people not speaking English well or at all. These characteristics of the population influence the library’s collections and the kinds of events it offers.
3.4.1 Library Place and Space

Figure 3.18 Location of Lane Cove Library; 139a Longueville Road, Lane Cove, NSW (Source: Urban Research Centre, University of Western Sydney, 2015)
Lane Cove Library is located on the main thoroughfare of Lane Cove, Longueville Road (see Figure 3.18). It is a five-minute walk from buses going into the Sydney CBD. The entrance of the library is at one end of the shopping area, seen in Figure 3.19. Like Whitlam and Narellan libraries, Lane Cove Library is situated in a central, easily accessible location that is near public transport and other amenities.

The public areas of library are located on the ground floor, with private staff offices and common areas on the first floor and additional private book storage (the ‘stacks’) and staff workspaces in the basement. The public part of the library is a large, long, open space, with the children’s library at one end, and an enclosed local history section at the other (farthest from the entrance). Large windows let in substantial natural light, and there are numerous semi-private, tucked-away spaces for reading or work, as well as more open spaces for leisure reading.

Inside the entrance of the library, a circulation desk is situated on the right, and a reading area for magazines and newspapers is on the left. A second information desk is located further into the library. Figure 3.20 shows the magazine and newspaper reading area of the library, which is near the entrance. This area is designed to facilitate some level of conversation, and often
library spaces are arranged such that louder and more open spaces are located near the entrance with quieter spaces for quiet study and reading further in (Mattern, 2007a). Armchairs are arranged in a way that allows conversations to occur, with seats facing each other as well as next to each other, acting almost as an extension of the public space outside the library.

Figure 3.20 Reading space near the entrance of Lane Cove Library
Once a visitor passes the reading area and desks at the entrance, the space gives an impression of being one large room of books. Beyond the entrance, the library space is quite linear, from the design of the carpets to the rows of the shelves (as seen in Figure 3.21). Meeting rooms, reading chairs, and study desks line the perimeter, and bookshelves occupy most of the centre.

At the end closest to the entrance, the shelves begin with junior non-fiction (adjacent to the separate children’s library). Audiobooks and the large print collection are located next to the junior non-fiction and near the entrance for the ease of older library visitors who are the key users of these collections. These are followed by the fiction collection, which leads to the second information desk. Non-fiction fills the shelves to the end of the open space, where there are more meeting rooms and the local history library. The rationale behind this ordering of space stresses the point that the library dispositif is not only about individual components but how they are arranged; the way these spaces are positioned and the logics behind their arrangement are examined in the following chapter.
3.4.2 Library Resources and Services

The events and collections at Lane Cove reflect the well-educated population served by the library. The regular events at the library have a literary focus—in October 2014, the library hosted three author talks and the Lane Cove Literary Award Ceremony (see Figure 3.22). The library hosts a regular book discussion group, a writers-in-residence group, and a poets-in-residence group. It also hosts events in collaboration with local businesses and community groups, such as travel and health talks.

In addition, Lane Cove Library publishes monographs related to local history, and also anthologies of works from its Poets in Residence and Writers in Residence groups. These are published in the Lane Cove Library Local Studies Monograph series which was funded with an initial ‘seed’ grant from Lane Cove Council in 1982; profits from each publication fund subsequent titles (Lane Cove Council, n.d.b). The purpose was to produce works relevant to local interests that larger publishers typically do not have the inclination to publish, as well as making available information about the municipality to local researchers. As of 2015, eighteen monographs have been published by Lane Cove Library.
The collection reflects the more educated population in Lane Cove, with Librarian K reporting that she emphasises literary titles when developing the collection. She reported the ratio of literary books to popular fiction titles as close to 30:60 at Lane Cove, which is higher than most public libraries. Literary titles, books that are reviewed in newspapers and books that
are longlisted, shortlisted, and winners of literary awards are important parts of the collection, but popular fiction also has a place.

The ethnic background of the population also influences the collection. For example, their LOTE collection is small, with a diverse range of languages borrowed from the State Library. The only LOTE collection bought by the library itself (as of 2013) is the Chinese collection—the most commonly spoken language at home in the area other than English is Cantonese (3.1 per cent residents), followed by Mandarin (2.9 per cent). Furthermore, in terms of adult literacy resources, the primary use at Lane Cove Library is not traditional literacy, but rather English as a Second Language (ESL). This has slightly different implications for the self-improving elements of library provision which were mentioned earlier in relation to Fairfield Council and Whitlam Library. As Librarian J explained:

\[\text{Literacy in Lane Cove's never been a big thing, 'cause we've got a very well educated population. But the main use isn't traditional literacy, the main use is English as a second language.}\]

The LOTE collection at Lane Cove Library highlights the differences between the populations served by the three case study libraries. Lane Cove sits somewhere in between Whitlam and Narellan in relation to the populations’ ancestral background, languages spoken and English proficiency, all of which is reflected in the collection. The size of the difference is also evident in the physical space. In Lane Cove, the LOTE collection consists of one row of shelves, while at Whitlam the LOTE collection comprises approximately half of the shelves in the non-fiction room.

Computer provision at Lane Cove is another sign of the socio-demographic characteristics of the local population. The library provides spaces with power points for laptop use, plus twelve computers for public internet access. This is consistent with the wealthy and highly-educated population served by this library. Librarian J revealed that when the library was designed, they planned for twenty-four public access computers but at the time of the library’s opening reduced the number of computers by half and instead left the desks open for laptop use:

\[\text{We only put in the twelve PCs in that middle thing where we could have put, we originally intended to put in more. We've got a high computer usage in Lane Cove, and, you know, a high laptop ownership. That's not necessarily the case in all communities.}\]
The arrangement of computer and laptop spaces at Lane Cove Library highlights how the library responds to the needs of library users as well as the way libraries adapt to changing digital technologies. The time taken for a library building to move from planning to construction and opening can be substantial, and in that time technologies can advance, prompting necessary revisions to the design of library space. In the early 2000s, when planning started for the new library building, only one in three Australian households had internet access (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006). By the time the library opened in 2010, four in five households had internet access (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2014c). This decade also saw a rapid take-up of devices with wireless internet capability such as laptops, smartphones, and tablets. In 2000, it was appropriate for the library to provide more computers with internet access, but by the time the library was officially opened, access to wireless internet and space for people to use their own devices was more important.

Conclusion

Statistics in fact helped constitute the very ‘civil society’ in whose name it sought to speak. It maintained that ‘society’ was more important than the state or government. Statistics uncovered those ‘laws’ of the social, knowledge of which would enable correct governance to take place, a governance which respected the ‘natural’ self-regulation of society, and allowed rule to be ‘at a distance’. (Joyce, 2002, p.98)

The above quote from Joyce highlights the importance of statistics and data in making a population visible, countable, governable. As a component of the dispositif, statistics and data are tools used by councils and libraries when making decisions about resource allocation and how library services are shaped.

Furthermore, the dispositif is not divorced from context; the operation of the library dispositif is firmly embedded in its socio-spatial location. The library’s location and the public it serves are fundamental to the way spaces, services and resources are allocated and constructed. The importance of the municipality is also made apparent. The various components of the library dispositif and their arrangement are often driven or influenced by the council authority, affecting the library’s position as part of a broader strategy of metropolitan governance.

This chapter has focused on public libraries in Australia, and specifically on the three case study libraries in this research. While chapter one looked at the context in which the
modern contemporary public library emerged—particularly in developed, English-speaking countries—the aim of this chapter was to examine the socio-economic and geographic forces that influence three specific libraries in Sydney. Whitlam Library is situated in an area of lower socio-economic status and high level of cultural and linguistic diversity. Narellan Library serves a rapidly expanding population on the south-west urban fringe of Sydney, with a high number of young families. The third case study library, Lane Cove Library, services a relatively wealthy and well-educated population on the upper north shore of Sydney.

The differences in these three libraries are particularly important in this research as I explore the way libraries and library collections are created for heterogeneous groups of users, both within library systems and across different locations in a large city. Public libraries generally have many commonalities as they adopt the same legislative acts and fulfil similar missions of meeting their communities’ knowledge and recreational needs, but there are also important differences and nuances in the ways these missions are achieved which are often the result of the locations in which the libraries operate. The remainder of this thesis explores some of the key differences between these three libraries in greater depth.
Chapter 4
Designing for order

Introduction

Located on Longueville Road—the main thoroughfare of Lane Cove and home to specialty shops, cafes and restaurants, solicitors and real estate agents—Lane Cove Library is conveniently situated in the centre of town. The library building, at one end of Lane Cove Plaza, displays two styles blending historical and modern eras. Facing the road is the original library building from the 1960s, two storeys high and complete with a red-brown brick façade and arch windows extending from the second floor to the ground. Around the corner is a modern style in grey, cream and silver. The main entrance, comprising of automatic glass doors, is on this plaza-facing side. An imposing grey brick wall, in which two returns chutes are built, separates the glass doors from the café next door.

Signs adorn the doors and greet visitors at the entrance, simultaneously informing and instructing:

For your safety & security this building is under 24 hour surveillance

LIBRARY HOURS
Monday 10.00am – 9.00pm
Tuesday 10.00am – 9.00pm
Wednesday 10.00am – 5.30pm
Thursday 10.00am – 9.00pm
Friday 10.00am – 5.30pm
Saturday 9.00am – 4.00pm
Sunday 10.00am – 2.00pm

These baskets are for Library use only

There are strict times during which one may enter the library—the rhythms of the library are on a strict schedule. It is also evident that the library is a monitored space, the rationale being to protect the public's safety and security. Public libraries are often spoken about as open and
accessible spaces, but this openness and accessibility comes with conditions.

A key aim of this research is to interrogate the multi-layered nature of the public library. The purpose of this chapter is to take the reader into the library, beyond the entrance, and explore the various ways in which the library orders and regulates its users. It is divided into five sections, including three that focus specifically on a distinct technology or component that contributes to order in the library. I begin with the idea of the library as a dispositif and present a theoretical guide that frames the remainder of the chapter. The main empirical focus of this chapter is Lane Cove Library, but I also refer to the other case study libraries where relevant.

The second section examines the regulation of conduct. As well as being a free, open and public space, the library is a regulated space with expected behaviours. I draw on the works of Foucault, Joyce and Otter—and the ideas of the panopticon and oligopticon—to explore surveillance and security in the library. The various devices that allow for the regulation of a public that is for the most part unrestricted in terms of access to books, materials, and public library space are examined. I also consider the disruptions that occur when library users deviate from expected or intended behaviour.

Providing for reading is still a primary function of the library, and in the third section I examine the way a diverse public’s reading is accommodated through the creation of different spaces and atmospheres. The diversity of spaces within libraries has been explored by library commentators from media studies (Mattern, 2007a), library history (Van Slyck, 2000), and psychology (Mehrabian, 1976), among other fields. Their insights inform my discussion. In public libraries, spaces are available for leisure reading, studying, and working. These different modes of reading are made possible by the presence of multiple spaces each with a distinct atmosphere that influences behaviour. For example, at Lane Cove Library, an area for leisure reading has armchairs that are low, deep, cushioned and with armrests; inviting the reader to sit back in the seat, perhaps lean back into the chair or prop an elbow on the armrest. Elsewhere in the library, large rectangular tables are furnished with power points. The chairs here are higher, less cushioned, without armrests, and elicit a different posture to that of the armchair.

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58 As an open and publicly accessible space, the library can be a site of some unusual occurrences. ScanBC, the Twitter feed for British Columbia’s online radio scanning community, recently posted, ‘Vancouver PD attending to the Central Library. Security guards found a male completely nude on the 6th floor’ (ScanBC, 2015).
In the fourth section, I examine the ordering of the collection. The focus shifts to the books and the logics behind their arrangement. Lane Cove Library greets visitors with an abundance of bookshelves when they enter. No taller than the average height of an adult, these bookshelves span the length of the library. Books remain an important component of the library, and the classification and organisation systems used to arrange them are entwined with broader questions about power, knowledge, discovery and exploration.

The final section focuses on a particular part of the library. I enter the children’s library, a microcosm embodying the practices that regulate conduct and govern atmosphere. The children’s library reflects changing societal understandings of the concept of childhood and expectations of behaviour and literacy. In a way, the children’s library is an adult library in miniature. It exhibits similar devices around the arrangement of space, collection development, and the choice of furniture. This last lens through which I examine the library as an ordered space looks more closely at the ordering of one of its publics, the child reader.

4.1 **Library as dispositif and functional architecture**

I return to Foucault’s notion of the *dispositif*, and delve more deeply into how the library is created as an arrangement of various apparatuses and devices—a site containing multiple disciplinary control mechanisms that manage behaviour. As an institution, the library seeks not only to achieve aims relating to knowledge and content preservation; it also aims to encourage behaviours and habits related to literacy, education, and civility.

The municipal library is embedded within larger networks including networks of libraries and other municipal organisations\(^{59}\). But it is also its own heterogeneous assembly of architectural structures, legislative rules, and ways of co-ordinating functions for regulation and order. Even libraries’ architectural forms take distinctive shapes, so much so that library architecture and design is its own specialty. Here, I turn to some of the more concrete and visible elements of regulation and order in the library—in particular, the element of architectural structure.

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\(^{59}\) This embeddedness is most obvious when considering the way interlibrary loan requests are fulfilled. There is a network of administrative processes and logistics that enables libraries to engage in book requests and interlibrary loans, and to get books on their shelves (Mattern, 2015).
The form and function of a space tells a narrative: of who created it, under what conditions, and how it is used. Libraries have different histories that are brought together contingently, with multiple authors and narratives. They are acted upon by professional organisations and disciplines, local municipalities, and commercial actors. Architectural historian Markus (1993) contends that buildings are formative and not passive; they have agency. Buildings can shape the conduct of their users by influencing certain behaviours such as how people sit and move. Furthermore, the creation of the building is not the end of the narrative, as space is made and remade by its users and the original plans are disrupted; people can also use spaces and furniture in ways other than their intended purposes.

This is an example of Foucault’s functional approach to architecture, where material spaces influence conduct, as opposed to the symbolic forms of architecture that represent particular characteristics of power (such as the grandeur of a royal palace). Foucault suggests the use of observation and architecture can be a form of discipline, citing examples such as the prison, hospital and school. He defines the functional approach to architecture as:

An architecture that is no longer built simply to be seen (as with the ostentation of palaces), or to observe the external space (cf. the geometry of fortresses), but to permit an internal, articulated and detailed control – to render visible those who are inside it; in more general terms, an architecture that would operate to transform individuals: to act on those it shelters, to provide a hold on their conduct, to carry the effects of power right to them, to make it possible to know them, to alter them. (Foucault, 1975, p.172)

Sociologist Paul Hirst summarises Foucault’s description, describing structures built in the mid-eighteenth century ‘with the object of isolating and controlling individuals … Separation and inspection had the objective of both maintaining discipline and promoting hygiene’ (1993, p.57). Bentham’s panoptic prison is an example of functional architecture, where the whole structure ‘corresponds to certain demands of use’ and is arranged around the goal of inspection and observation (Hirst 1993, p.59). The strategy in the panoptic prison was to govern through transforming behaviour⁶⁰. The architecture allowed for sightlines, lighting, and visibility such that

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⁶⁰ This contrasts with the custodial prison, which was ‘often monumental, symbolizing its strength and solidity, but its plan was not subject to the demands of inspection’ (Hirst 1993, p.59)
inmates could be constantly watched, but were not necessarily so: they would not know when someone was watching, just that at any time, someone could be. These ideas of functional architecture, inspection, surveillance, and regulating behaviour can be seen in the modern public library, and will be discussed further in this chapter. Now, I look briefly at earlier libraries and their architectural forms in a view of highlighting the distinctiveness of the modern public library.

Pevsner, in his 1976 work on architectural history, discusses the spaces within monastic and cathedral libraries. He explains that before the fourteenth century, the places in which books were stored were rarely considered libraries. From the late fourteenth century, books in monasteries tended to be kept in a cupboard in the choir or niche of the church (Pevsner, 1976). This space is referred to as a carrel and these were designed for monks’ reading and writing. Although the modern public library bears little resemblance to these carrels, closed stacks which are inaccessible to the public and partially hidden nooks for quiet reading or writing can be reminiscent of these niches. These spaces reveal a specific understanding of what the library is and the kind of regulation that it seeks to impose.

In terms of the development of various library forms, the university library followed the cathedral library. The first universities were established in the thirteenth century, and resulted from a need for books in more places (Pevsner, 1976; see also Campbell, 2013). University libraries held significance as the first libraries opened to large numbers of students and scholars, making them the first ‘working’ libraries (Harris, 1995). The earlier libraries embodied a sovereign or religious power, whereas power was less centralised in the university libraries, which were opened to a wider audience. These different forms of power are reflected in changes in library architecture, with private and individual places of silent reading and study giving way to more open spaces where books were more accessible to larger groups of readers.

Authority and the source of regulation within a library shifted once again with the development of the free public library in the nineteenth century and the municipal government became the locus of power. The free library was a technology used by authorities, in part, for the

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61 During the thirteenth century, there was a growth in towns and commerce, learning was expanded to a wider audience, and there was a corresponding growth in administrative tasks and need for written documents. In the United Kingdom, after the disappearance of monastic libraries, the Oxford and Cambridge libraries became the most important institutional collections in the country; by 1620 the Bodleian Library at Oxford had 16,000 volumes and was one of the largest libraries in Europe (Kelly, 1966). The Oxford and Cambridge libraries also developed methods of library organisation that were widely imitated (ibid.).
governance of free subjects. This was achieved through the design and use of library space, including the provision of a library catalogue that enabled readers to access books.

Spaces in nineteenth century British library buildings were typically designed to elevate the act of reading and celebrate certain ideals of the Enlightenment era of the seventeenth to eighteenth centuries, such as scientific investigation, the creation of new knowledge and self-education (Bivens-Tatum, 2012). Libraries were entwined with desire for new knowledge and the belief that self-education was necessary for productive citizens. They were often constructed as monumental spaces decorated with sculptures, busts, and paintings of celebrated figures of self-help, learning, and literature as well as inscriptions that communicated similar messages (Black et al., 2009; Joyce, 2003). Reading rooms were an important part of these libraries; palatial spaces designed exclusively for serious reading, a space of silence and light. Newspapers were displayed on their own tables, stands or reading slopes, reminiscent of the lecterns in old university libraries. Joyce suggests that the aim of this palatial air and presence of silence and light was for the ‘spatial production of a ‘debate’’ through which ‘the truth would emerge and the light of knowledge reveal itself (physical light thereby producing the light of knowledge and truth’ (Joyce, 2003, p.133). These are lofty ambitions indeed.

Although these spaces are constructed with particular ideals in mind, there is a broader societal influence. Like Markus’ notion of the building as a narrative produced by those who use it as well as those who created it, Black et al. argue:

All technology is socially determined, and the technology that is a building – including its style, internal plan and its relation to surrounding spaces and structures – is no different in this respect. In other words, at one level buildings can be said to merely incorporate society’s ideas and beliefs. (Black et al., 2009, p.55)

Black et al. are speaking of the notion of social engineering and control in nineteenth century British public libraries, and their point emphasises the complexities involved in understanding space and behaviour—the link between space and behaviour is not straightforward, as if spaces are designed in certain ways by a central authority to shape behaviour but rather are contingent on multiple forces and influences. Building designs reflect not only the will of the governing authority but also societal norms and expectations. Furthermore, when people then use the space, the space itself is remade. The idea that technologies such as libraries reflect society’s ideas is also seen in the accessibility of books, although perhaps it would be more accurate to suggest
that society’s ideas change with developments in technologies. Consider, for example, the case of open access.

Open access to books was not available to British public library users until the final two decades of the nineteenth century (Joyce, 2003) and its introduction was subject to much controversy and debate (Black et al., 2009). Previously, readers had to consult a library catalogue, select a book, check an indicator to determine the book’s availability, and ask the librarian to retrieve the book from the shelves (Black et al., 2009). Generally, only a single book could be borrowed at a time. Open access transformed the arrangement of space, the furniture required, and the way the role of the library was understood. An element of control was relinquished by the librarian (and by extension the state) and readers were given more freedom. Before open access was introduced, the norm was for the librarian to act as a gatekeeper, a guardian of the books—an extension of the understanding of libraries as an ordered space of knowledge and control.

Now, open access is the norm except for special libraries and collections. Library mission statements often mention access of information and material for all, library spaces and furniture are designed to accommodate browsing and access, and the societal expectation of the public library is to be able to freely browse and select books.

However, the library user is not completely free to do as he or she pleases; the user is still regulated despite having freedom to physically remove books from shelves. Black and Pepper (2012) point out that when open access was introduced, the user was regulated through the architectural device of the entrance and exit gates and the observation of librarians enabled through the design of library space. In libraries now, users need to pass through electronic security gates when exiting, books and other materials need to be properly checked out and demagnetised, and spaces are designed to enable surveillance and supervision.

Security, surveillance, and ensuring appropriate behaviour of users are concerns of all libraries. Measures implemented in pursuit of these aims are evident in different types of libraries, though the devices used vary greatly. In national and state libraries, surveillance is often conspicuous. At the Library of Congress in the United States, visitors pass through security screening before being allowed entry. Reading rooms in libraries such as the Library of Congress and the State Library of Victoria are grand, circular rooms displaying characteristics of Bentham’s panopticon: ‘at the periphery, an annular building; at the centre, a tower … the panoptic mechanism arranges spatial unities that make it possible to see constantly and to
recognize immediately’ (Foucault 1975, p.200). In these reading rooms, the librarian occupies the seat of power in the centre of the room with a (theoretically) all-encompassing gaze.

This level of surveillance has not always been solely the domain of great national libraries. Smaller municipal libraries have exhibited similar tendencies. Black et al. (2009) report that in nineteenth century British municipal libraries, spatial design was one way of exercising control: ‘Librarians worshipped long and hard at the ‘shrine of supervision’ … their libraries were duly equipped with its machinery, in keeping with the professional ‘gaze’ that characterised Bentham’s Panopticon’ (Black et al., 2009, p.51). This gaze is, however, not entirely panoptic. An important feature of the panopticon is the subjects not being able to see whether the observer in the central tower was watching and having to presume they were constantly under surveillance (Hirst, 1993). In the library, this was not always the case—patrons are typically able to see the librarian’s desk and the gaze is mutual.

Hierarchical spaces in the library gave way to a more democratic structure, an arrangement where the librarian did not have an all-encompassing gaze. Joyce (2003) contrasts the new British Museum Reading Room, built in 1857, with the old Reading Room first built in 1674. He explains that although the new Reading Room displays certain elements of panopticism there was a shift in library design. The new Reading Room, though it had the circular layout, also separated readers from each other and had them seated alongside each other rather than face-to-face. While this may appear to be a simple reconfiguration of furniture, it indicated a shift in the way behaviour was regulated, a new kind of surveillance that also enabled privacy. Joyce explains:

This surveillance was of a new kind, a self-surveillance that was also collective, one that constituted a community of the self-watching. The creation of the liberal subject in its new and increasingly democratic forms involved the many viewing the many, rather than the one viewing the many. The panopticon gave way to the oligopticon of the Reading Room. (Joyce 2003, p.133)

The democratic, oligoptic space of the new British Reading Room described by Joyce is akin to the spaces found in many contemporary public libraries. While there are still ‘seats of power’ in the form of librarians’ desks, it is rarely one central position that overlooks the entire

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62 Black et al. report that in Castleford’s public library, ‘glass panels helping to separate departments allowed the gaze of the librarian to fall on a number of rooms at one time’ (2009, p.51).
library. Rather, the space is typically designed for multiple lines of sight consistent with the features of the oligopticon: ‘This makes an oligoptic space an arena within which a small group of people observe each other: it is a place in which mutual oversight takes place’ (Otter, 2008, p.74). Furthermore, the notion of the oligopticon is closely linked to ideas of freedom: ‘the freedom to look and be looked at, the mobility of the gaze, and the capacity to withdraw into utter privacy: all marked urban space as categorically nonpanoptic’ (Otter, 2008, p.75). The notion of a space where surveillance is important but is not always achieved by a constant, authoritative gaze is evident in the modern public library.

4.2 Regulating conduct in the contemporary public library

In this section, I explore these issues around security, surveillance, and spatial design in relation to Lane Cove and other similar modern public libraries. The most obvious surveillance feature of public libraries is the librarian’s desk, which is supplemented by employees on the floor undertaking duties such as shelving or roving reference. In Lane Cove Library, there are three librarians’ desks: a circulation desk at the entrance, the children’s librarian’s desk in the children’s section, and the information desk located about halfway down the library, opposite the youth room and adjacent to the computer and study desks. Additionally, security cameras monitor the space. One screen for the security camera is located at the information desk, evident in Figure 4.1 and pointed out by Librarian J: ‘You can tell we’ve got screens with the security cameras above the desk so people know that they’re being watched.’ The security cameras create a panoptic effect, whereby library patrons are aware that there is monitoring and they could potentially be watched at any time, but do not know precisely when the librarians are watching.

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63 This is where staff members walk around the library offering assistance.
Figure 4.1 Security monitoring at Lane Cove library

Despite having security cameras in place, the librarians’ desks are still important for surveillance. There are two main reasons for these desks: accessibility for patrons and security. Librarian J explained:

*Just monitoring the area. And, and about security. You know, that’s a completely dead area unless … We’ve designed it so you can see that desk from there, and that desk from there. Just for security. And sightlines so you can see in the junior library. So we’re trying to cover sightlines with different areas.*
Figure 4.2 Main circulation desk at Lane Cove Library

Figure 4.2 shows the main circulation desk in the foreground. The information desk is just visible in the background of the image. Librarian J admitted it was unusual to still have large desks in libraries, as the modern trend is for smaller desks with more mobile librarians. However, she explained that the large physical space of the library necessitated the desks, for both customer service and security. The sightlines mentioned by Librarian J are evident in this image, as librarians at both the circulation and information desks have a view of each other.

These concerns around security, sightlines and the governmental responsibility of the library are also visible in Figure 4.3. At Lane Cove, the youth room is directly opposite the second information desk, separated by a glass door and windows allowing for a direct line of sight between desk and room. In Figure 4.3, the information desk is positioned in the foreground and the circulation desk in the background on the right; it shows the reverse of the view depicted in Figure 4.2.
In front of the desk, in the centre of Figure 4.3, is the youth room. The presence of a youth room highlights the location of the library at the public education nexus; it is a state-provided resource for work and study that acts almost as an extension of the school. The library provides book resources for students such as its HSC collection\textsuperscript{64}, supplementary events such as HSC lectures, and a dedicated space for teenagers. The position of a librarian’s desk facing the room recalls the supervision of a teacher over a classroom\textsuperscript{65}. The library is distinct from the classroom and school with a less formal schedule of activities but it remains a close relation, supporting the objectives of the school.

\textsuperscript{64} The Higher School Certificate (HSC) is the set of final exams undertaken by students in high school in NSW. Public libraries in NSW often have an HSC collection of study guides, set texts used in the English curriculum, and other reference material heavily used by HSC students.

\textsuperscript{65} Kirk and Spiller, in writing about the classroom from the eighteenth century, observe that the classroom came to operate as ‘a differentiating space, one in which the spatial distribution of pupils allowed close supervision, and a highly visible hierarchy of competence and worth depending on where pupil were positioned in relation to the teacher and to each other’ (1993, p.112).
Meeting rooms are provided by Lane Cove Library for students, community organisations and commercial operations, and these are also visible in Figure 4.3, next to the youth room. The design and location of these meeting rooms reveal important insights around ordering the public. The library is fundamentally a regulated public space. As seen in Figure 4.3, the meeting rooms have glass walls and doors which allow the occupants to look out while also allowing librarians and other members of the public to look in. This potential for mutual and reciprocal visibility is a security design feature of the rooms. The library’s publics can be separated, or ordered, into different areas of the library while remaining visible. They are for the most part free to act as they wish, but there are mechanisms in place to ensure that users are following behavioural norms and expectations such as not disturbing others, engaging in illegal behaviour, or damaging library property.

This is consistent with what Otter describes as an oligoptic space, and his suggestion of the library as an oligopticon. He observes:

The spatial and visual morphology of the library created a visual environment characterized by oligoptic reciprocity, supervision, pockets of privacy, and proximate, complex signification. One was often under the scrutiny of others, be they fellow readers or superintendents. One could also scrutinize readers or superintendents as well as withdraw to the privacy of the bathroom or one’s own home, as and when one chose. (Otter, 2008, p.259)

The modern public library is a space characterised by supervision, mutual sightlines and the ability to retreat into private corners. Furthermore, governmentality is concerned with managing a population for the interests of the state as well as the individual. Joyce suggests that to think of liberal governmentality is to think of ruling by freedom: ‘to consider the absence of restraint as a form of restraint … the active and inventive deployment of freedom as a way of governing or ruling people’ (2003, p.1), which is consistent with oligoptic principles and evident in the libraries studied here. The earlier comments from Librarian J about planning for security suggest that the

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66 There are separate hire rates for various groups, with students being able to use the rooms for free if they are unoccupied.
design of space plays an important part in allowing for surveillance, whether it is considered through a panoptic or oligoptic framework.

An additional point to consider regarding the contemporary library as an oligopticon relates to the commercial culture of bookselling that is having a more influential effect on library spaces. Libraries are seen not only as providers of objects but providers of services, and library users are thought of as ‘customers’. The trend towards smaller librarians’ desks and mobile librarians who ‘rove’ to offer assistance and advice is similar to retail principles of greeting customers and being proactive in interactions with customers. In the library setting, the movement of librarians from behind the desk and onto the floor changes the lines of sight and foci of surveillance. Rather than the panoptic design of one static position overlooking a large space, the gaze here is multidirectional and constantly changing. Thus while panoptic elements remain in library design, the contemporary public library also exhibits features of the oligopticon, both in terms of the production of library users as self-governing citizens who are responsible for their own book selections and behaviours, free to observe the actions of others as well as the trend towards smaller librarians’ desks and mobile librarians. The contemporary public library incorporates but panoptic and oligoptic elements.

4.2.1 (Mis)behaviours in the library

Despite devices for managing behaviour, there are still occasions of misbehaviour in the library67. Hidden nooks and pockets of privacy (features of the oligopticon) in the library provide users with opportunities for rule-breaking. Library users are free to observe each other, but also free to do what they like, and the authority of the librarian is not always enough to prevent misdemeanours. The oligoptic or panoptic space is not necessarily a perfect surveillance machine, at least not in the library setting. Despite the existence of sightlines and monitoring,

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67 Bialek’s article, *The Secret Life of a Public Library Security Guard* (2015), reveals the various misdemeanours that can occur in a public library, such as entering while intoxicated. She tells the story of a security guard in the Portland Public Library in Maine, US and describes the ordinary and extraordinary events that happen during the course of his work. In a space as diverse, busy, and public as the library, it is unsurprising that cases of misconduct occur.
opportunities for miscreant behaviour remain such as vandalism of books or users returning books to incorrect places, and disrupting order.

Lincoln and Lincoln (1982) reported on crime in public libraries in the US and noted behaviour such as vandalism, verbal abuse, and building damage. In the twenty-plus years since that paper was published, libraries have adopted methods such as surveillance cameras, spatial design, and magnetic tagging of items to reduce misbehaviour. However, there remain incidents of misconduct in libraries. McKechnie et al. (2006) conducted research into library user misconduct in public libraries in Canada, finding that typically, library users followed the implicit codes of conduct. Furthermore, typical of the oligopticon, they also found user-driven enforcement strategies in place, observing many instances where ‘a library user misbehaved and another user was able to successfully correct or reprimand them, resulting in ‘proper’ conduct and behaviour’ (McKechnie et al., 2006, p.7). This frequently took the form of parents or guardians admonishing their children for inappropriate behaviour, or older patrons frowning or ‘hmph’-ing to register disapproval.

Not all atypical behaviour in libraries is explicit rule-breaking or even necessarily disruptive; unexpected behaviours take various forms. In the libraries studied here, complexities and disruptions in what is expected of the space were revealed by librarians and library users alike. One moment of unexpectedness related to the norms of library space was revealed to me in the interview with Lyle, a butcher who worked near Lane Cove Library and would visit the library on his lunch break to read books. I asked if he read his own books or read library books, and he replied that he read the library’s books. He elaborated:

*I think it’d just be weird walking in with a book and reading it in the library. … I thought they’d go, ‘Hey, you haven’t done something to this book’, you know what I mean. You can’t just walk out with that.*

Lyle’s anxiety about potentially breaking a library rule by reading his own book, and walking out with a book that does not belong to the library, exposed an assumption that I held about public libraries: that the rules of library use were inherent, obvious, known. Certainly, while there are

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68 When I approached a potential library user about participating in this research and explained that it was about her reading and library experiences, she agreed and also exclaimed, ‘Oh the stories I could tell you! Do you want to hear about people having sex in the [university library]?’
codes of conduct and signs throughout the library that indicate what users should not do, there are often no corresponding signs that explain what behaviours are acceptable.

Another point of disruption to the ‘normal’ use of library space was mentioned by Ned, a frequent user of Narellan Library. I asked where he usually sat to read in the library, and he answered:

_On the floor. I often sit in front of the actual bookshelf. I’m a real browser, grazer, so I’ll just sit down with no purpose, don’t know what I’m looking for but I’ll know it when I see it, then I’ll see an interesting book there and I’m known to sort of sit there for so long looking at it my legs fall asleep._

A great deal of attention is given to furnishing a library (discussed later in this chapter), and librarians consider the practicalities of certain types of stools, chairs, and desks; the floor in front of the shelves is not generally considered a place where people will sit to read and relax. But Ned is not alone in his habit of sitting on library floors. Figure 4.4 shows the researcher browsing old magazines in San Diego Public Library, unaware a photo was being taken.

Figure 4.4 The researcher in the stacks at San Diego Public Library (Photo: Brandon Sherman)
These examples of unexpected library use indicate that despite the intentions of architects and librarians, the ordering and making of library space is not simply a theoretical exercise and a top-down approach to planning. Rather, it involves the interactions between people and space; it is an ongoing process.

Librarians reported similar examples of disruptions and points of complexity, though the seriousness of offences varied. At Lane Cove, the reports of misconduct were generally mild and involved examples such as moving furniture, as Librarian K explained:

*These chairs will move by the end of the day; people will turn around and they will watch out the window and that is what they do. We tell them not to move the furniture but that falls on deaf ears.*

More serious misdemeanours were reported at Whitlam Library, where a group of teenagers was reported to police because of repeated acts of disorderly behaviour and disrupting other users.

What is considered inappropriate behaviour varies between library systems. In May 2015, the Edmonton Public Library in Canada implemented a policy banning sleeping in the library (Klingbeil, 2015). This has detrimental effects on homeless people who use the library as a shelter, but librarians argue that homelessness in the city is a deeper issue that needs to be addressed at a higher level. By contrast, Librarian A at Whitlam Library said, of homeless people in the library:

*If they just want to come in out of the cold or the hot or the rain or the wind or whatever and sit somewhere, then fine. As long as they’re not doing something that gets in other people’s faces which sometimes they do, then I’ve got no objection to them sitting and having a sleep.*

She perceives the library’s space as an important resource for all members of the community, and her comments reveal the differences between library systems and policies. Furthermore, the issue of homeless people in the library illustrate the potential discrepancy between the objective or purpose of a space and the way that it is used. This tension between the librarian’s intention

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69 San Diego Public Library has a similar policy, and during an informal conversation I had with a librarian there in May 2015, she commented that the library is not someone’s home or a homeless shelter, so therefore sleeping is an inappropriate activity in the library.
for the space and the way the space is used highlights Woolgar and Neyland’s (2013) point that space is not simply an abstraction—the ordering of space is a method of governance expressed in the activities and actions that occur within the space.

The infractions mentioned above illustrate how spaces are continually made and remade, and are not simply the physical manifestation of a librarian’s or architect’s ideal but are instead lived, everyday sites where users move furniture around, readers sit on the floor, people dog-ear books, and children run around noisily. More serious transgressions also occur, and the librarian’s gaze is still necessary. Additionally, the way behaviour is ordered and influenced is not achieved through solely through surveillance, signage, and codes of conduct; there are other contributing features of the library as a governing space.

4.3 Governing library atmosphere

The use of ‘atmosphere’ in influencing behaviour has been seen in various disciplines. In more theoretical discussions, affect, mood and atmosphere have been objects of study in cultural studies (Highmore, 2013) and social science (Anderson, 2009). Morale and affective atmospheres has been studied as strategies of liberal governmentality (Dibley and Kelly, 2015) and as a dispositif (Anderson, 2014), particularly in relation to the importance of morale in a time of war. In these examples, atmosphere itself is produced through various devices which act as ways of governing conduct. An interpretation of ‘atmosphere’ that is closer to everyday speech (where it is often used synonymously with ambience or mood) is evident in environmental psychology (Mehrabian, 1976) and in marketing, particularly in the areas of retail design and consumer behaviour (Donovan and Rossiter, 1982; Kotler, 1974; Michon et al., 2005; Quartier et al., 2014; Spies et al., 1997). The approaches from environmental psychology and marketing more overtly perceive atmosphere as something to be produced for the purposes of influencing behaviour, rather than as an outcome of various other devices and technologies.

It is this second approach that is most fitting in discussions of atmosphere in the library, and there is potential for the environmental psychology approach to be incorporated into the dispositif; atmospheric production (in terms of ambience or mood) is an important element of regulating behaviour. I consider atmosphere here in relation to reading spaces and return to the idea in chapter six where atmosphere is applied to the notion of the library as a community space. The atmosphere of the library is produced by several different components such as professional reports and recommendations (like the State Library of NSW’s People Places report),
the decisions of architects, designers and librarians, and the availability of furniture and other materials from library suppliers.

Libraries have long had different spaces for various purposes. The contemporary public library typically has spaces for multiple publics and multiple purposes within the main building, a feature the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) characterised as ‘libraries within libraries’ (2003, p.26). The 2003 CABE report Better Public Libraries showcases various design practices in public libraries across the UK and notes that libraries need to negotiate conflicting demands on their space: ‘solitude versus interaction, quiet versus noise, order versus mess, openness versus security and limited hours versus ‘24/7’ expectations’ (Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment, 2003, p.26). The way many libraries resolve these tensions is to create different spaces to cater for various activities and types of reading.

This concept of creating different spaces for different uses is observed by Mattern in American public libraries. She describes the reading space within Seattle Public Library:

Within the room are differing conditions, from the intimate and informal to the rigorous and organized, from linearly ordered carrels to grouped foam chairs in an arresting red, for all kinds of reading moods, methods and materials, both analog and digital. (Mattern, 2007a, p.110)

Spatial arrangement, colour of furniture, and the material of the object all combine to create atmospheres designed for different paces and styles of reading—the posture of a reader sitting in an armchair next to a lamp emitting soft lighting will be different to the reader seated at a desk in a hard chair. Consequently, the types of reading undertaken in these two different seating scenarios typically differ too. The library user is not commanded to read in any particular way; they are free to read a light novel at a study desk, or complete a scholarly piece of writing in an armchair. However, the design of the space structures different types of reading and compels certain behaviours.

Novelist and essayist Manguel elaborates on the importance of physical reading space to the act of reading:

The mental atmosphere we create in the act of reading, the imaginary space we construct when we lose ourselves in the pages of a book, is confirmed or refuted by the physical
space of the library, and is affected by the distance of the library, and is affected by the distance of the shelves, the crowding or paucity of books, by qualities of scent and touch and by the varying degrees of light and shade. (Manguel, 2006, p.133)

Manguel’s rather more evocative description of reading spaces, imaginary or physical, emphasises Mattern’s point about different conditions in the reading room. By establishing different spaces, the library is not only accommodating various users, but actively inviting users to read in and interact with the library in multiple ways. These spaces are designed for different paces of reading: formal and informal, leisurely and scholarly, and even silent reading or reading out loud.

In a similar vein, architectural historian Abigail Van Slyck notes:

Spaces are now designed especially for different modes of reading, from cozy corners with comfortable chairs to monumental reading rooms that elevate the act of reading by situating readers at long rows of tables within a community of intellectual engagement. (Van Slyck, 2000, p.151)

Van Slyck’s observation reflects the different paces and hierarchies of reading in the library. There is reading lifted or positioned as higher, grander—the kind of reading that takes place at high desks, with straight postures, and transports the reader into a figurative realm of scholarly engagement through material objects and bodily practices. There is also more relaxed, leisurely reading, where one might slouch or slump in the seat. Mattern describes these different zones as a ‘hierarchy of spaces’, stating that librarians often specify that:

High-activity, high-noise public activities are placed off major circulation corridors or close to the front door, whereas study and research areas are placed further from the main entrance, and nonpublic components, such as the library’s headquarters, are farthest from the entrance. (Mattern, 2007a, pp.110–112)

The arrangement of space is particularly important in a library given its function as a public reading space—and especially for multiple and diverse publics—and the requirements this
entails. Mehrabian argues that a library is a place where books are used, and therefore its spaces should make it easy for readers to explore and read the collection. He discusses the idea of ‘environmental load’ (external stimulation), and observes that people prefer less loaded settings (quieter, fewer distractions) for more difficult and serious reading, whereas they generally accept more loaded environments for lighter reading. He suggests libraries should have spaces to cater for different reading: high load places for ‘fun reading’ and less-loaded areas for ‘those doing complicated reading and research’ (Mehrabian, 1976, p.167).

Two examples from library user participants illustrate these ideas about physical space, atmosphere and modes of reading. Nancy, an avid reader and mother of two young children, spoke of the physical changes in the body that occur when reading aloud to a child:

*When you read aloud to a child, your tone changes, your body language changes, the way you sit, the way you phrase a word, all of that, and it’s different to when you’re, when my little guy sits on my lap to read a book, it’s very different to when he sits on my lap watching TV, or if we’re sitting at a park or at someone’s house. Very very different. And what’s created there is a focus on something that it’s just the two of us, and as I said, the tone changes and all of that. Your whole physicality changes when you read aloud to a child.*

This contrasts with the kind of reading Logan, a final-year high school student, does in Lane Cove Library. He explained why he preferred studying in the library to working at home:

*I find it’s quieter. … And it’s much easier to focus. Also because it’s an environment where people do come to work and maybe it’s kind of a psyche thing, it adds to a harder working mentality.*

Figure 4.5 shows a row of study desks at Lane Cove Library. The windows visible in the image let in abundant natural light, blurring the line between outdoors and indoors. This reflects ‘the arrival of new materials and a modernist aesthetic which promote[s] transparency and the interplay between indoor and outdoor spaces’ (Worpole, 2013, p.179). The Victorian and Edwardian ideal of the library as a closed world and separate from the city and street is no longer

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70 Mehrabian remarks that ‘a collection of books is not a library but a warehouse’ (1976, p.166).

71 Power point hubs are located in the middle of each desk that can each accommodate up to four electrical devices.
true of contemporary public architecture or libraries, and a shift in thinking of the library as a closed and secluded sanctuary has occurred, at least at Lane Cove Library.

For Logan, atmosphere and the presence of other people working made the library a place conducive to work. Similarly, Nancy spoke about the atmosphere of the library that made reading aloud to her child an enjoyable experience, such as the lounge area at Narellan Library visible in Figure 4.6. The space required for a parent reading aloud to a child will necessitate a different space to a student working; these are spaces with different noise conditions and furniture requirements, both of which are represented in a typical modern public library. Material and spatial forms are inextricably linked to atmosphere in this sense, and the way these spaces are constructed and atmospheres designed can be understood as a liberal form of rule.
4.3.1a Furnishing the Library

Furniture and fittings create various spaces within the library and are important material components of the library dispositif that contribute to the production of different atmospheres and influences the way people relate to the objects of knowledge. Mattern acknowledges:

I recognize these furnishings as much more than utilitarian equipment; instead, they scaffold our media technologies in particular ways, inform the way human bodies relate to those media in particular ways, and embody knowledge in particular ways. (Mattern, 2014b, p.1)

As the material form of the book has changed, so too has the way they are stored. Book storage has transformed from jars of scrolls that preceded codices, to chests and boxes that protected early books in monasteries, to chained lecterns, and then to open shelves that displayed books vertically. Campbell, in his history of world libraries, notes that a history of a library is as much a history of books, as the material form of the book shapes the physical structure of the library (Campbell, 2013). In describing early university libraries, Markus reports:
The books rested on single or double sloping surfaces, and the reader stood or sat facing this slope. The books were usually chained, and sometimes also stored on shelves under the lectern. (Markus, 1993, p.172)

The lectern system was not particularly space-efficient, and the increase in books after the advent of movable type led to the next stage in library design: stalls. Markus, quoting Clark’s 1901 classification of library furniture, depicts this system as ‘shelved partitions which separate the single-sided or back-to-back seats … by stalls’ (1993, p.172). Pevsner also discusses this system, adding that usually two shelves were added above the lectern (1976, p.94).

However, the move from lecterns to stalls still proved to be insufficient storage and the wall system was developed. This was where ‘the centre was left open for reading tables and side and end walls also had to be shelved’ (Markus 1993, p.172). The way the stalls, lecterns, and shelves were positioned regulated how books were read and how users behaved. Mattern suggests that:

With the book newly emancipated, so, too, was the reader freed to take books away from the stacks to a nearby stool, bench, lectern, or table. The mobility of the book afforded the user a sense of control over its use, and thus, perhaps, greater intellectual liberty. (Mattern, 2014b, p.8)

The format through which knowledge is presented, and the structures in which these objects are housed, affect the freedom people have to engage with the item.

Furniture has a broader function in the contemporary library particularly as it relates to the production of atmosphere: to suit a library’s overall design scheme and support its position as a community space. The CABE (2003) report observes that long stay use for study purposes is a trend common in contemporary public libraries, and this requires different infrastructure. It suggests that users who are using libraries for extended periods will expect amenities such as public toilets, catering, and recreational quiet zones.

This is recognised in the State Library of NSW (SLNSW)’s People Places report (2012), a guide for the design of public library buildings in NSW. This report is an important non-material component of the library dispositif that affects the material elements of the library. It influences how libraries are designed and built, but it is not compulsory—the council or library can follow
its suggestions but at the same time it can ignore or adapt the suggestions to accommodate financial or spatial restraints.

- Small shelving display units added to the ends of shelving aisles. In various guises these are able to display face-out books, and carry aisle signage, etc.
- Face-out display of magazines, CDs, DVDs, and talking books is very attractive.
- The use of perspex end panel display holders, to provide easily changeable displays, or signage relating to changing events.

While adherence to a methodology of signage and display can be frustrating for library staff, the branding and unified appearance of graphics and fitout of a library has become increasingly important (see Section 5.6 Making Libraries Memorable – Experience and Brand). The professionalism of the library can be reinforced and promoted by well considered graphics and ensuring that signage is consistent. Avoid hastily printed and ‘sticky-taped’ signage wherever possible. Consider assistance from a graphic designer to provide a graphic handbook and a series of stationary and signage templates for future use. They are not necessarily difficult to use and contribute significantly to the library’s appearance.

5.9 FURNITURE AND FITTINGS

Furniture and fittings should be attractive, durable and comfortable, and should be selected with the characteristics of the library architecture and clients in mind. The selection of furniture should fit with the overall design scheme, and philosophies governing flexibility, functionality and sustainability. Consider the changes in library philosophy which has moved from a hierarchical and institutional environment in favour of a comfortable, welcoming aesthetic, typified by the term ‘community living room’. Allow for both individual reading as well as collaborative, social environments. It is normal practice for the building’s budget to include not only the total cost of the library building but also all built-in fittings, known as FF&E (fixtures, fittings and equipment) although this is not always the case. If the architect’s scope and building budget do not allow for this work, it is highly likely that the library staff, who are not normally trained in interior design and furniture specification will be responsible for the fitout. This can be very stressful for ‘laymen’ and may lead to false economy in terms of the final outcome. Items included in a typical fitout are listed in Section 3 Tools – Checklist for Library Fitout.

While the architecture of a new or refurbished library might be excellent, without careful design, the fitout can diminish the final outcome. The design and selection of furniture and fittings is very important and some of the following issues require specific attention:

- The selection of furniture and fittings must be unified with the overall design concept
- Despite their convenience, furniture suppliers are not limited to library supply catalogues
  There is a myriad of furniture and accessory suppliers with exciting and professionally designed pieces at a range of prices, who supply to designers, architects, builders and the domestic, retail, commercial and hospitality trade.
- Colour, texture and materiality of all furniture and fittings has an immediate impact on the overall design and should therefore be integrated into an overall concept
- Modular or ‘system’ furniture has some advantage over custom built items such as greater flexibility and reduced cost, particularly for shelving, tables and desking.
  The systems are generally designed to be reassembled in a number of configurations and often accommodate power and data cable management. These systems are becoming increasingly sophisticated and can allow for customisation. Custom items can also be designed as an assembly of smaller items/modes which can be used in different ways
- The future availability of stock should be considered in terms of replacement and addition of items
- Floor surfaces should be hard wearing, easily replaced (particularly carpet), comfortable and non-slip. The choice of floor covering, as with all surfaces, will influence acoustic performance and aesthetics
- The cost of maintenance of all items should be considered particularly in reference to cleaning, painting and repairs
- Systems which allow for part replacement, re-upholstering, as well as recycling are a better long term sustainable response
- A series of criteria for environmentally responsible selection of furniture is available as part of the Green Star rating tool.

The Australasian Furnishing Research and Development Institute (AFRDI) is an independent not-for-profit technical organisation providing standards, testing, product certification and research for buyers and sellers of furniture. Testing and certification can ensure that products are not only safe, but that they will last, thus contributing to sustainability, and minimising use of the earth’s resources. See Section 5.11 Ecological Sustainability (ESD – Environmentally Sustainable Design).

Document 4.1 shows the ‘furniture and fittings’ part of the report. It highlights the importance of creating a library space that has an aesthetically pleasing design scheme—much like a commercial space—with key suggestions seen in the document related to the creation of a particular atmosphere, such as the ‘colour, texture and materiality’ of objects which should contribute to the ‘comfortable, welcoming aesthetic’ and, in particular, the increasingly influential notion of the library as a ‘living room’ (see chapter six). But the nature of the library as a public institution is also clear, as the report emphasises the importance of institutional practicalities, such as the need for furnishings to be flexible, durable, easily replaced and with low maintenance costs.

The People Places report is merely a guide for public libraries and not a mandate. Other devices are created by individual libraries that are more prescriptive about libraries’ furniture needs, as evidenced by the 1975 Report on the furniture, furnishings, and fittings for Lane Cove Library. This included specific measurements of various types of furniture, the materials, drawings, and quotations from suppliers. Document 4.2 shows the specifications for shelving. The specifications indicate different types of shelving for various purposes—different sizes for different audiences, with shorter shelves for the children’s library, and for a range of materials the shelves are required to house.
The library has changed considerably since 1975, but furniture selection remains a complicated process, exemplified by the example of selecting stools. In Figure 4.7, a black foot stool is evident in a fiction aisle at Lane Cove Library.
Librarian J recounted various factors the librarians considered when selecting those stools:

> We didn’t want the ones on wheels. ... Because we thought they were dangerous. That people would get on them and they’d go shooof. And we didn’t want the ones that was like steps, like we used to have, because people hit their knees and things. ... It took us ages to decide.

This quote demonstrates that the stool is not just a stool; it is a technology within the library dispositif and its features have implications for behaviour and safety. The purchase of the innocuous, seemingly simple stool that is visible in Figure 4.7 was in fact a matter of considerable deliberation that had to consider issues raised in the People Places report, such as the flexibility, durability, and ease of replacement of the furniture while also taking into account the librarian’s duty of care. Furthermore, the selection of furniture in a library involves both the practical matters described by Librarian J as well as the broader concerns related to the way people interact with media and space. The way that furniture can influence the way space is used
highlights its potential for governance. The library has objectives related to municipal governance, community-building, and accommodating activities such as reading and learning. The furniture in the library contributes to particular atmospheres as well as being a technology that affects posture and movement. Another seemingly mundane detail that factors into the arrangement of library space is noise.

4.3.1b Sound and Silence

The local studies room at Lane Cove Library is a separate temperature-controlled room at one end of the library. Inside, there are study desks, shelves and drawers of local studies material. The furniture in here is similar to the rest of the library; it is the sound level that makes this room distinct. Unlike the rest of the library where there is a low level of ambient noise, in this room silence prevails, creating a studious atmosphere. Foucault’s understanding of the dispositif includes what is unsaid as well as what is said; here an important part of the dispositif is what is not heard. It is located the farthest from the entrance and it also the quietest space, exemplifying the notion of a hierarchy of noise in libraries.

At Lane Cove, the areas near the entrance of the library are the noisier children’s and leisure parts of the library, and the quieter, more studious parts are situated deeper into the building:

Librarian J: The fact that the large print leads to the audio books, and leads to the DVDs leads to the CDs. Like there’s a lot of seniors’ main usage is around this area. And then we have the fiction. So, the leisure type things tend to be at the front of the library.

Researcher: So when you first come in?

Librarian J: Yeah. And it’s quite deliberate too, that this is supposed to be the noisier part of the library. And it tends to, when you get towards the back, we designed it to be quieter.

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72 This point noted by Woolgar and Neyland in their observations of airport furniture: ‘We start to see how the furniture of the airport is implicated in its governance. The seats do not simply and straightforwardly face away from passengers as they enter departures; rather, the seats face away to direct passengers toward shops, accomplish the airport business model, and satisfy the airport board and shareholders’ (Woolgar and Neyland, 2013, p.173).
This hierarchy and physical separation of the loud and quiet spaces is also evident at the other two study libraries, highlighting the varied needs that library spaces are required to meet, including different sound requirements.

Mattern argues that considering evolving understandings of what libraries are and for whom they are built, new ways of thinking about sound in libraries are required. She suggests that ‘each of the activities that takes place in a library — including reading, viewing, media-making, even dating — has its own appropriate sound conditions’ (Mattern, 2007b, p.279). While silent reading is commonplace, it is only one of many activities, including other, louder modes of reading. Librarian K revealed:

[The library manager] often comes down and makes sure that the library is humming, is working, there is no little angsts. And we will often get people saying, ‘Oh you know it is too noisy, the kids are mucking up’. Well it is their library too: we built them a separate library.

Silence is no longer a requirement but rather a choice, and multiple atmospheres and sound levels are accepted and accommodated in modern public libraries. These concerns are evident in the design choices at Lane Cove Library, where there is separation of loud and quiet spaces. Proximity planning is used to ensure security, workflows, accessibility for users and noise control.

Mattern recommends that different zones within the library ‘fall on a gradient of privacy and publicity, including fully enclosed, secure spaces; semitransparent spaces; and fully open spaces’ (Mattern, 2007a, p.112). CABE and Mattern use dichotomies to describe library spaces (quiet and loud, private and public, closed and open) which highlight the heterogeneity of public library spaces—not only between different libraries, but within an individual library. These different spaces and atmospheres are not randomly placed but rather have a deliberate arrangement and order.

4.4 Ordering the collection

Historically, public libraries were established for the creation of an enlightened citizenry (Harris, 1995) and for the purposes of disseminating and archiving knowledge (Kelly, 1966).
Contemporary libraries have shifted in focus and exhibit multiple functions and purposes, including leisure and entertainment. This is evident in not only the content of their collections, but also in the order and display of collections. This also speaks to issues of power and knowledge: the power inherent in curation and display of knowledge, and the ability to influence which books are borrowed and read. This section looks specifically at the arrangement of books as a form of curation; in chapter five I look more closely commercial influences on book displays in libraries.

4.4.1 Understanding Dewey

The process of ordering books is known as classification, the purpose of which is to ‘bring together things which are like and to separate things which are unlike’ (Wynar, 1972, p.193). The most commonly used system is the Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) system, a system developed by Melvil Dewey in 1876. The system divides all books into ten main subject classes, with further divisions and subdivisions. It is, essentially, a way of organising the world’s knowledge.

The way the classification system was developed reveals its philosophical underpinnings. Wiegand (1998) traces the origins of the DDC and reveals that Dewey had brought together threads of various classification schemes already in existence in the nineteenth century. Importantly, Wiegand argues the DDC was a system borne out of a particular social and historical context: the aim of many nineteenth century educational institutions was to build character, and at many New England colleges, character was built on a foundation of Protestant orthodoxy, Western culture and the classics. As a result, Dewey’s worldview was reflected in the classification system, where knowledge was absolute and the mind was seen as a vessel to be filled.

The power inherent in classification systems is emphasised by literary scholar Michelle Kelly, who suggests that the DDC functions as an expandable literary theory, assessing and...
ordering books based on a particular worldview (Kelly, 2007). The DDC is shaped by theoretical assumptions that structure practice in scholarly pursuits. She asks, ‘Your book from 001.3 Humanities? The DDC has neighboured it. What do you think of its plan for the district?’ (Kelly, 2007, p.185). This question draws attention not only to the social and historical contexts in which the system was developed but also to the environment in which it is continually revised75.

The DDC is concerned primarily with non-fiction, and works of literature are relegated to one class, 800. Libraries have no standard system for classifying fiction subgenres, and Sapp argues that the difficulty in classifying fiction has resulted in librarians establishing more objective markers used in its ordering and retrieval such as the author’s name or nationality (Sapp, 1986). By doing this, Sapp says, ‘librarians do not so much classify fiction as organize it’ (1986, p.488). Kelly observes that there is a subtle but important distinction between classification and organisation; organisation is classification’s surrogate when a type of book proves too difficult and problematic to classify (Kelly, 2014). The difficulties in classifying fiction have a long history, and libraries and librarians have tended to develop their own systems in the absence of a universal standard.

4.4.2 Shelving by genre

In many public libraries, fiction is increasingly ordered by genre, and there are more instances of subject shelving for non-fiction as opposed to wholly adhering to DDC76. Subject non-fiction shelving tends to be more general than DDC and can bring together topics that are separated in the DDC, such as moving baby names from 929 (the DDC subclass for genealogy and names) to an area for ‘health’ or ‘parenting’. In the early twentieth century, some library buildings in the US were planned according to specialised subjects (Rayward, 1982). British libraries, during a period of modernism in both library architecture and librarianship as a profession in the 1960s, also saw the emergence of subject departments in some larger library systems (Black, 2011).

In the three libraries studied here, Lane Cove Library organises its books traditionally—alphabetically by author surname for fiction and by straight DDC for non-fiction—while

75 The DDC is an ever-changing system, with the 23rd edition released in 2011.
76 The Public Library Network, part of the SLNSW, recently surveyed public libraries in NSW on their non-fiction collections, and of the 41 libraries that completed the survey, 30% organised adult non-fiction by themes or subjects (State Library of New South Wales, 2015c).
Whitlam and Narellan Libraries both organise fiction by genre and some non-fiction by subject (with the remainder by DDC). Figure 4.8 shows the crime and mystery collection in the adult fiction room at Whitlam Library.

[Image: Crime and mystery shelving at Whitlam Library]

Ordering books by genre and subject is typically seen in bookshops, where crime, science fiction, fantasy and romance fiction are often shelved apart. In terms of non-fiction, science, history, current affairs, biography, gardening, business and religion are typically separated. Genre shelving results in greater ease when browsing for types of books, and can encourage greater sales. In explaining the genre shelving at Whitlam, Librarian C stated, ‘It’s sort of like the bookshop concept from a marketing point of view’. Although the mission of the public library is distinct from that of a bookshop, the library borrows techniques from selling books for the purpose of circulation, (see chapter five). Librarian A from Whitlam Library revealed that genre shelving was adopted in an attempt to make the books more visible and accessible to borrowers, and thereby increase circulation figures.

There is still a goal of ordering books in such a way that makes books and knowledge accessible, with implications for book selection, browsing and exploration in both traditional
DDC and genre/subject arrangements. This ties in with Summit’s (2008) point about libraries in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries exercising power in the selection and ordering of books. In the contemporary library, a particularly important point is the notion of serendipitous discovery, where readers find books accidentally while browsing, discovering authors, titles, and subjects purely by chance. This kind of discovery depends on how books are arranged and shelved, and how much freedom users have when browsing. As such, the ordering and arrangement of books becomes part of the curation process; not only are librarians deciding which books ought to be in the collection, they are also determining how the books are arranged so that they may be found. This reinforces the authority of the librarian within the dispositif; they not only have the power to determine or influence what material elements become part of the library, they also have the authority to determine how they are arranged.

The idea of users discovering unknown authors is raised by Rippel: ‘Readers also began picking lesser known authors within their chosen genre’ (2003, p.150). This is an interesting counterpoint to the argument that genre shelving results in the loss of serendipitous discovery when browsing, which was raised by several librarians. There are two perspectives on the idea of serendipitous discovery. Firstly, as mentioned by Rippel, genre shelving can lead to users reading different authors. Librarian C from Whitlam Library described the effect:

{quote}So it’s trying to encourage your customer to go beyond their comfort zone in reading and some people go, ‘I only like Jeffrey Archer and I don’t care who writes like Jeffrey Archer, I just want Jeffrey Archer’ and they wait for the next book. But if you put them sort of near someone else, ‘cause Jeffrey Archer sits next to all the other alphabetical order books and they might not be next to that style of writing or genre. If you put them in the same genre, they’ll go, ‘Oh I might try that’.{quote}

Therefore, if the books are shelved by genre, the user would be more willing to try a new author. However, Librarian N from Whitlam Library offered a counter-argument. She suggested: ‘If that’s the genre you read and go to all the time, you miss the other things that you might have found next to it. Or even the other books that author might have written.’

This view was echoed by Librarian J from Lane Cove Library, who explained why their fiction collection continues to be ordered alphabetically:

{quote}You’re sort of cutting off exploration. Because even though you’re not forcing people to explore, they’re having that option and they might do it. But if they, if you put them in their comfort zone and they stay
This comment relates to an earlier point about the liberal subject—library users are not forced to discover new material or broaden their reading horizons, but they are given the opportunity and encouraged to do so. Librarian J stated that genre shelving could be seen by library users as ‘dumbing down’ the collection. This sentiment is echoed by Hopkins:

One borrower was outraged that the library was dumbing down the collection … The notion of dumbing down the collection was exactly the intention, as we wanted to make the library easier for everybody to use — not just a highly educated elite. (Hopkins, 2007, p.10)

The issue of shelving also raises a point about the power of the user, the liberal subject who can choose books for themselves and decide the most suitable book for their needs if given the opportunity. Librarian E at Narellan Library described the rationale behind their reference and non-fiction shelving:

> When the library first opened, it had, for example, a fairly traditional layout in terms of its non-fiction collection. Children’s non-fiction was separated out into one spot, youth non-fiction was in one spot, and adult non-fiction was in another … First move, we pulled all of the non-fiction collections into one collection. … Customers don’t care if it’s a kid’s book, a youth book or an adult book. And sometimes it’s very hard to make a judgment on the reading… on the capabilities of the person looking for that information. … This might be a 20-year-old person that’s looking for this information, but their reading age might actually be lower. They’re more interested in seeing everything on the subject in the one place, and then we can go, What do you think is the most appropriate level?’ and let them choose, let them make that decision.

Like the philosophical underpinnings of the DDC system, principles behind book shelving can express certain ideas about users, including what responsibility they ought to bear for their own book discoveries. The comments from Librarian J and Hopkins indicate that more educated
users are more accustomed to DDC and fiction shelved alphabetically by author surname, and may be affronted by a change to the traditional arrangements. This then raises the questions around for whom, exactly, libraries are created—everyone, or only an educated elite?

These rationales behind shelving strategies and the ensuing discussions about discovery and serendipity also highlight notions of power. Librarians, in their selection of what type of shelving to adopt, are suggesting a particular way to browse and select books (and thus a particular way of acquiring knowledge) and enacting a kind of disciplinary power. There are also issues of privacy and sensitive collections\(^78\) that are considered when ordering books and considering the accessibility of books, which are related to issues of power and knowledge, though perhaps in a slightly different way. The ease of access to types of knowledge can empower the library user, or these knowledges can be placed in more inaccessible ways and thus take away power.

Elements of the governmental role performed by the local public library’s collection are evident in the importance placed on commercial techniques and circulation figures, thus highlighting its part within the dispositif. The collection becomes a device. Power is evident in the tension between the traditional purpose of the library and the push in adopting commercial strategies more broadly. The shift in forms of governmentality, from a public/welfarist model to a more neoliberal form of governmentality which prioritises individual choice also has an impact on the ordering of books. The tension between the traditional form of power (the authority of the librarian) and the power of the marketer and the reader is neatly encapsulated in the following statement from Librarian E from Narellan Library:

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\text{In terms of selecting our fiction, popular is king. There is no doubt that our performance is measured in terms of the amount of use our libraries get, and we need to make sure we give our customers what they want, not necessarily what we think is good for them.}
\]

Librarian E’s comment about giving customers what they want may indicate a power shift from the librarian to the user—no longer is it a case of only the librarian mandating what is ‘good’ for

\(^78\) The English literacy collection at Lane Cove Library is shelved at the start of the non-fiction collection, away from the entrance. The shelves themselves create a barrier between the collection and information desk, offering users of that collection some privacy. Similarly, the youth librarian at Narellan Library spoke about needing to place lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender books in a place that would allow users to find them without the need to ask for assistance.
the patron, but the user having the power to not use the library if the service does not meet his or her requirements. However, it is not that the reader is now liberated from power and authority in their book selections. The mobilisation of the consumer signifies a form of authority over the consumer by other commercial actors; it is a power shift to visual merchandisers, marketers, publishers and book retailers, where books are sold to consumers before they even enter the library.

One final point ought to be made here regarding the relationship between governance and the ordering of books, with regards to who is physically placing books on shelves. In a library, there are often trolleys for users to leave their books instead of returning it to the shelf, partly as a way for librarians to be aware of which books are used even if they may not be borrowed (and hence will not appear in circulation records), and as a way of ensuring books are returned to their correct positions. The ordering and classification systems put in place by librarians can only function effectively as long as books are not returned to the incorrect spots; the reality of open access means that books can be lost or misplaced without ever leaving the library.

4.5 Producing the child reader

One distinct part of the library highlights the idea of the library as a governmental device: the children’s library. This section brings together the three different components of the library as dispositif previously discussed—ordering behaviour, space, and collections. I examine one specific section of the library and its broader governmental project of producing a child reader and encouraging early literacy, and consider how the way this space is designed contributes to that aim. Typically, the behaviour in this area of the library is relatively more difficult to control, and it tends to be a noisy library space. Kevin Hennah, visual merchandising expert and library consultant, spoke of this conflict between the need for quiet study spaces and the noise levels of large groups of children (2013; personal communication). However, he also characterised children’s storytime as the ‘cash cow’ that ‘gets people through the doors’, highlighting the almost

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79 When I asked Naomi, a long-time library user in her 70s, about what she had observed changing in libraries over the years, she commented, ‘I think they’re a lot more about the community and a lot more about people using them and I don’t like it. I mean, yes, they can use it, but I don’t like the noise. I like it to be quiet in there.’ She mentioned the noise of children running around everywhere and said she preferred the library when it was all about the books.
necessity of having a children’s program and children’s space in the public library. This was not always the case.

4.5.1 Developing children’s libraries

In the UK, the provision of children’s libraries became pervasive from the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century. This reflected a move towards greater education for all during the Industrial Revolution as industry moved from the home to the factory and there was a greater concentration of people in industrial towns (Ellis, 1968). Although there were children’s libraries before the 1890s, their provision was fragmented. Ellis reports that in 1891, there were forty libraries in England that had dedicated children’s collections80 (Ellis, 1968). By 1898, 108 libraries in England and Wales provided collections for young people, signalling a provision of children’s services in libraries akin to the scale of modern libraries (Black et al., 2009; Ellis, 1968). From the end of the nineteenth century, the focus on establishing appropriate spaces for children in libraries grew. Worpole (2013) recounts that in 1924, a study of children’s library provision was published that depicted the attention then given to creating suitable environments for children. Black et al. report that after the First World War, ‘work with children became increasing [sic] recognised as a legitimate and important facet of librarianship’ (2009, p.242). By the 1930s in the UK, a large percentage of library loans were to children.

Children’s library experiences in the US developed along a similar timeline with library provision specifically for children emerging in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries as ideas of the child as a reader transformed. In 2014, the New York Public Library (NYPL) curated an exhibition titled ‘The ABC of it: Why Children’s Books Matter’. The exhibition began with a display on ‘visions of childhood’:

Are children born innocent or sinful? Empty-headed or wise? Should they be ‘seen and not heard’, as an old adage recommends, or granted free rein to play as raucously as they wish? Should they be taught to think and act as good citizens? (New York Public Library, 2014, p.4).

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80 For context, 225 public libraries established in England and Wales between 1897 and 1913 (Ellis, 1968).
These questions have shaped the development of children’s literature and the way children’s and young people’s services are delivered in libraries. The exhibition outlined the history of children’s books in the US, covering the effect of social class, the emergence of the idea that children learnt more effectively through playing and doing rather than rote memorisation, and various understandings of childhood.

Andrew Carnegie’s philanthropic libraries were the first to provide a library experience for children in the US in the opening decades of the twentieth century (Van Slyck, 1995). His children’s libraries provided a blueprint for the children’s library experience for the first half of the twentieth century. These libraries provided a welcome space for children outside of the home, a place where physicality was superimposed with imagination.

Van Slyck used various memoirs of children’s libraries in her discussion of children’s spaces in Carnegie libraries in the US, and she observes, ‘The act of reading colored the impressions that some young readers formed of the library building itself, overlaying library architecture with associative meanings unintended by the adults who provided the library facilities’ (1995, p.208). Some of these libraries had a commanding presence from the librarian, whose gaze was sometimes inescapable. This intimidation was not typically a permanent state. Van Slyck reports: ‘While many childhood memories of Carnegie libraries begin by painting the librarian as a daunting figure, most also document a transformation in the librarian-reader relationship, as young readers learned to value the librarian’s advice’ (1995, p.209).

There are several reasons for this development in children’s library services, the two most significant being changes to librarianship as a profession and shifts in the meaning of childhood. In the early twentieth century, the spread of public libraries accelerated, thus ‘facilitating and legitimising the emergence of specialised services, including services for the young’ (Black et al., 2009, p.243). Professional librarianship was strengthening at this time, with training for specialised librarians and increased writing about the needs of children in libraries. These changes in librarianship and understandings of childhood led to better trained librarians.

Another important feature in the development of children’s libraries was an emergence of the notion of ‘childhood’. Ariès, in his history of the concept of childhood from the tenth to nineteenth century in Europe, reports that the modern meaning of the term ‘child’ did not appear in frequent usage until the seventeenth century (Ariès, 1960). The first notion of childhood emerged within the context of family life and was characterised by ‘coddling’. A second concept of childhood developed in the seventeenth century from churchmen who ‘were unwilling to regard children as charming toys, for they saw them as fragile creatures of God who
needed to be both safeguarded and reformed’ (Ariès, 1960, p.129). The nineteenth century saw the development of a formalised childhood (Stauffer, 2014). In the UK, legislation banning child labour was introduced in the 1830s, state education appeared in 1870 and was made compulsory in 1880, there was growth in interest in child psychology around 1900, and the school-leaving age incrementally rose between 1870 and 1900 (to 14 by 1900). Children, especially those from middle-class backgrounds, could partake in new leisure opportunities such as parks, museums and libraries (Black et al., 2009).

As these changes occurred, children’s libraries also changed. The library became a tool for managing the population, and the children’s library a way of producing literate and engaged child citizens. The shift that occurred from authoritarian and ‘dull’ spaces to warm and comfortable spaces reflected a change in the way children were regulated that was a product of a particular historical moment.

The library, alongside schools, became part of a broader program of education which employed pedagogic practices and architecture to produce a certain kind of child. In a report on the connection between schools and public libraries in Australia, Bundy argues, ‘Education is lifelong and broad based. Many institutions and experiences will contribute to every individual’s educational experience. Schools and public libraries should be pivotal for all who use them’ (2002, p.53).

The governmental aspect of a child’s education and the creation of the child as a citizen is picked up by Tyler. In her analysis of a 1930s kindergarten in Australia, she writes:

What we have in the kindergarten then is an example of a governmental programme designed to form a particular type of person, the better child, who would become a more effective adult citizen … The ‘better child’ was a product of various knowledges and strategies, including psychological knowledges and the architectural arrangements of the kindergarten. The ‘better child’ was by definition self-regulating, rather than coerced into obedience. (Tyler, 1993, p.53)
However, in the 1930s, children’s libraries in Australia were not as well developed as those in the UK or US, despite there being a program to produce a self-regulating child as a citizen.81

Furthermore, public library development was uneven. Goad and Nichols (2010, p.88) report that the ‘true forerunner to the municipal public library as it is now known – operating on an educational and improving, civic impulse – was the children’s library’. They offer examples such as a children’s library that opened in Port Adelaide in 1901, and the New South Wales Children’s Library and Crafts Movement which opened its first centre in 1924. These were typically libraries located in ad hoc spaces, not dedicated buildings, and despite the presence of these libraries, children’s spaces within the adult municipal library was a later development. Remington and Metcalfe (1945), in their overview of the Free Library Movement in Australia between 1935 and 1945, reported that it was not yet understood in Australian libraries that the children’s library is part of a library serving adolescents and adults, not isolated institutions.

The idea of producing a good citizen was a common theme in early children’s libraries. In America, mass immigration in the early twentieth century resulted in a perceived need for children to be taught how and what to read to become ‘good American citizens’ (Black et al., 2009, p.244). Children’s libraries are thus located at the nexus of education and citizenship, and can be perceived as one instrument used to produce ‘good’ children. This role is reflected in the space of these early children’s libraries. Black et al. describe them as ‘stern, barren, uninspiring, mean and dull’. Photos of early children’s libraries show rows of seated children as though in a classroom or church, facing the librarian at the front of the room (Black et al., 2009, pp.250–1). By the 1920s, however, more convivial children’s libraries were starting to be designed, in reflection of different styles of regulation. The space provided was more reminiscent of a home environment, signalling a shift in the kind of order imposed on library users from dictatorial discipline to regulation based on domesticity.

4.5.2 Designing modern children’s libraries

In the contemporary public library, a warm and friendly children’s section is commonplace. For children, the library has become a destination, not simply a source of books.82 This is partly due

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81 New ideas emerged in early twentieth century Australia about infancy and childhood, leading to purpose-built facilities in the 1920s and 1930s such as infant health and welfare centres and kindergartens (Lewi et al., 2010).
to the integration of the children’s library as a key component of the library design process. In a shift from the state determining what the children’s library ought to look like, Mattern (2007a) reports that at Denver Public library in the US, focus groups were conducted with children and their parents about what they expected of the children’s section. These found a desire for visual stimulation, spaces for different modes of reading and child-scaled furniture and service desks—similar components to the adult library, only smaller.

These expectations of children’s libraries are evident in library design guides, knowledges which form an important part of the building’s narrative. On children’s areas, the People Places report recommends providing a broad range of spaces for play space, quiet reading space, and space for carers. It also recommends that libraries be flexible for various activities and programs, and have customised book shelving ‘with niches, cubbies and lookouts, designed to allow children to explore, crawl, climb and hide - to find their own space’ (State Library of New South Wales, 2012, p.97). The report, an important part of contemporary library discourse and in itself a governmental device, exemplifies the shift from an authoritarian disciplinary approach to libraries to a more ‘government through community’ method (Rose, 1996a) (discussed further in chapter six).

The children’s library is particularly important in Lane Cove, as Librarian J reported: ‘We do put a bit of an emphasis on children. Like quite significant space.’ She added, ‘There’s lots of young families moving into the area. So, you know, our, as a result, our collection’s changing and the way we’ve laid out the library is probably a bit different.’ This is consistent with government statistics, with 2011 Census data revealing 20.2 per cent of households in Lane Cove are couples with young children (under the age of 15), compared with 18.3 per cent in greater Sydney (profile.id, 2011g).

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82 Worpole comments that children and young people are often ‘completely at home in their local library, where they are treated with a respect that is frequently denied them in the streets and shopping centres’ (2013, p.98).
At the entrance of the children’s area at Lane Cove library are two brightly coloured cushioned circles, suitable for sitting and reading or climbing (see Figure 4.9). The circles create a physical barrier separating the children’s area and the rest of the library. The tables and chairs in the children’s area in Lane Cove are made of plastic and thus washable, and are a child-appropriate height (evident in Figure 4.10). The tables are round to facilitate conversation, and the stools are lightweight and easy to move. The bookshelves are shorter, to enable easy access by children, and on wheels to allow for flexibility (see Figure 4.11).
Figure 4.10 Furniture in the children's library at Lane Cove

The ease of movement of the furniture shifts some of the power from the librarian to the patron and indicates the multiplication of authority. The space is not arranged in a dictatorial fashion; even children can move the tables and chairs around.
Figure 4.11 Children’s bookshelves in Lane Cove Library
Along the far wall of the children’s library are four study desks, which are suitable for group study and can each seat four people. The layout is similar to the positioning of study desks in the main library, and again large windows let in light and accommodate visuality. Near the study desks are four computers equipped with internet access and educational programs (seen in Figure 4.12). The study desks and computers reinforce the function of the library as a place of education and produce a particular expectation of how the space is to be used.

In the far corner of the children’s library are two lounges for adults, in keeping with the State Library’s recommendation that children’s areas also accommodate carers (Figure 4.13).
Librarian J described the need for these lounges:

*We’ve got two lounges here. The idea with the lounges are that, you know, obviously we’re a breastfeeding friendly area. So the parents, because a lot of parents have two or three young children. So the mother’s going to sit.*

This is indicative of changes in attitudes towards breastfeeding, with greater acceptance of breastfeeding in public, and indeed, with Australian legislation permitting mothers to breastfeed anywhere in Australia (McIntyre et al., 1999). This highlights the way that libraries adapt to shifting societal attitudes and norms, and how they reflect the needs and desires of the communities they serve. Furthermore, the couches are in the opposite corner to the children’s librarian’s desk, allowing for a supervisory gaze of both parent and librarian that spans the entire area of the children’s library.

Another factor contributing to supervision of children in this space is the openness of the area and adequate illumination. Floor-to-ceiling windows on three walls of the space allow for ample natural light, consistent with State Library guidelines for lighting. Its *People Places* report notes that the benefits of natural lighting include greater comfort levels and a healthier built
environment, if solar heat gain and glare are controlled for (State Library of New South Wales 2012, p.87). The children’s space at Lane Cove is well-lit by natural and fluorescent lighting, creating a bright atmosphere that elevates visibility both within the library and of the world outside.

The children’s library is understood here as an example of the library as a governmental instrument where a certain atmosphere is deliberately constructed. Historically, the library played a role in the formation of the child as a citizen, instructing them in proper conduct and contributing to the development of a reading habit. The children’s library was one way of governing children that worked in concert with schools and the family unit. The children’s library now is more concerned with inculcating a reading habit and introducing concepts such as early literacy to parents and carers, and a warmer and more comfortable atmosphere has become the norm. The child user of this library is to an extent self-regulating, able to arrange and rearrange furniture, and freely select books (from a carefully curated collection).

4.5.3 Encouraging reading in children

Narellan Library is located in an area with many young families, as detailed in chapter three, and its collection and events reflect this. Camden Library runs a ‘Babies into Books’ (BIBS) reading and rhyming event every Thursday morning, and storytime for children aged between two and five on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. Narellan Library hosts BIBS twice a week, on Wednesday and Friday mornings, and storytime three times a week, on Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday mornings during both term time and school holidays. These events draw people to the library and promote early childhood literacy.

Storytime events at the library not only provide ways for children to be exposed to reading and language, they are ways to show parents and caregivers the importance of reading aloud for early literacy and demonstrate effective ways to read to children (Ghoting and Martin-Díaz, 2006). Librarian C from Whitlam Library explained, ‘One of the benefits of story time and baby time is that it provides role modelling (from the story teller) for parents on how to read to children and to strengthen

83 In comparison, Lane Cove Library holds one storytime event a week, and a baby event every second Wednesday during school terms. Whitlam Library holds storytime events twice a week, on Wednesday and Friday mornings during school terms, and no baby reading events, though there are baby reading events at other branch libraries in the Fairfield library system.
the idea of why reading is valuable from a literacy point of view as well as social interaction.’ She added that
storytime is a good bonding session for parents and their children, and at Whitlam Library, ‘We
actually have five minutes (between storytelling and craft) where we ask parents to pick a book and sit with their
children and do some reading together, then when they have finished their book to make their way to the tables to
do craft.’ Several library user participants reiterated these points when they spoke about the
importance they placed on reading to their children and taking them to the library.

I met Noah during storytime at Narellan Library. He agreed to be interviewed and we
met the following week during at the same time; his visits to the library were centred on
storytime. Noah spoke about the importance of reading and books for his son:

> He speaks very clearly for a three-year-old little boy, and it’s from reading books. Like he can pronounce
all these dinosaur names I couldn’t pronounce when I was older than him.

> I got [a book] the other week about washing your hands because he always, after the toilet, ‘I
don’t wanna wash my hands!’ and there’s a book that says ‘I don’t want to wash my hands’ so I got it
and when I was reading it to him, it really sunk in, and now he gets off the toilet and says ‘I’ve got to
wash my hands’ because it’s all about germs make you sick, and it’s really really sunk in. That’s what I
mean, books are really helpful.

This reveals two different benefits of reading: speaking and enunciation skills from reading aloud
and being read to, and the role of imagination and book characters as role models. Books and
reading can have long-term outcomes like improving literacy and speaking skills, and they can
also have direct and immediate effects such as teaching lessons about hygiene to a stubborn
three-year-old. The importance of the library in facilitating reading in young children is clear: it
provides books for free, which is particularly significant for parents and caregivers who may not
be able to afford to buy books regularly for their children and it runs events like storytime which
promote awareness in the importance of reading aloud.

Another example of reading to children is found in the case of Libby from Lane Cove
Library, who instilled a love of reading in her own children and now takes her grandchildren to
the library. Libby is a retired teacher and a lifelong avid reader, and she spoke passionately about
promoting children’s reading:

> That’s another thing that is so important, as a person, to pass on that love of books, you’re not imposing
it, it’s not a chore, it’s something that you do from choice. It’s not a must do. And so they’ve seen that one
One of the most important things in your life is to read, and that gift of reading for the children is the most important thing they do as a parent.

Her comments here reveal her belief that an important part of parenthood is to develop a love of reading, and her actions in taking her grandchildren to the library show the library’s role as a partner in this act. The library is not the sole driver of reading in children, but it is a key stage where a reading habit can be inculcated, providing books, spaces, and events that support reading to and by children.

The two examples of Libby and Noah and their experiences of storytime, reading to children, and using the library indicate the appeal of the library across class lines and social stratifications, and the common goal of inculcating reading in children across a range of libraries and library users. Noah comes from a working-class background, having completed high school and vocational training. He was not a reader as a child, and even as an adult does not read a great deal. Libby, in comparison, is highly educated and from a higher social class. Despite their differences in gender, age, education, social background, and possession of literary cultural capital, they both spoke about the importance of instilling a habit for reading in children, the benefits of reading to children, and revealed similarities in their use of the library as a reading space and source of children’s books.

Conclusion

Leaving the children’s space at Lane Cove Library takes one past the magazine and newspaper reading area, a community noticeboard, the main circulation desk, and back through the automatic glass doors. Security gates ensure visitors are not leaving with items that have not been properly checked out, and a people counter keeps track of visitor numbers—library users are regulated, ordered, and counted from entry to exit.

This chapter used the public library as an everyday site to explore Foucault’s idea of the dispositif as a governmental device that regulates conduct and behaviour. The library has a long history of controlling access to books, and in doing so influencing the population in certain ways. Scholars such as Black et al. (2009), Hornsey (2010), Joyce (2003) and Rose (1999) have written about the civilising role of the library, guiding a populace towards education, culture and self-betterment. This chapter has brought the discussion of these governmental roles of the library
into a contemporary, local context and examined the specific technologies that enable a governing function.

In this examination of the library, four key observations are made. First, despite the proclamations in popular discourse of libraries as open, public and accessible spaces, they are not freely open—they are regulated spaces with rules of conduct, expectations of behaviour, and scripts to follow. These rules and behaviours are made known both explicitly and implicitly in various ways.

Second, users are regulated and ordered through a range of instruments and in different types of spaces. These spaces are designed with different furniture styles and sound requirements, leading to multiple atmospheres within the library. The positioning of different types of spaces reflect what Mattern (2007a) terms a ‘hierarchy of spaces’ where, for example, children’s libraries are located some distance away from study areas to balance the noise requirements of different user groups. The arrangement of space, positioning of furniture, and types of furniture used influence behaviour. Additionally, the way the collection is ordered and shelved affects how users browse and how books may (or may not) be discovered.

Third, the design of library space is governmental. Joyce’s idea of ruling by freedom and the self-governing citizen is relevant here, especially his observations about nineteenth century libraries. There are three aspects of library design related to its governmental role that are worth commenting on here: the library catalogue, decorations, and spatial layout. In the last two decades of the nineteenth century, open access to library books become more common, and the adoption of classification systems like the Dewey Decimal system changed the way libraries were used, where library users had more freedom to browse and select books than in earlier libraries. The libraries in the nineteenth century were decorated in ornate ways that commemorated traditions of self-help and learning, with bust and portraits of figures significant to the tradition of learning and literature. Learning and books were bestowed with a certain majesty. And finally, space was designed so that library users were transparent, visible to the librarian as well as each other, which facilitated ‘a self-surveillance that was also collective, one that constituted a community of the self-watching’ (Joyce, 2003, p.133).

The modern public library retains some of these elements of governmental design, though there are also important differences. Access to information is a key goal for libraries, and books are shelved, catalogued, and arranged in ways that encourage users to find what they seek as well as make serendipitous discoveries. In terms of spatial design, the library is an oligoptic space, where monitoring and surveillance is not directed only from the librarian in an
authoritative capacity but rather free and self-responsible users can monitor each other (Otter, 2008). Library users can admonish unacceptable behaviour, and forms of disciplinary action are available to users as well as librarians (McKechnie et al., 2006; see also Hartley, 2015). Sightlines, a mutual gaze, complex and simple signification and pockets of privacy are features of the oligopticon that are present in the public library.

However, there are also differences between the nineteenth century and contemporary libraries in terms of governmental design, and this is perhaps most obvious in the interior decorations. Unlike the nineteenth century trend of elevating certain figures who idealised notions of self-help, liberalism and learning, the contemporary library tends towards a democratic approach to interior design. Furniture, lighting and décor are chosen for flexibility, comfort, and the contribution to certain atmospheres. They vary according to the purposes of each space within the library. These different atmospheres signal to library users appropriate uses, behaviours, and noise levels in each space. Importantly, this approach to interior decorations also highlights a new frame by which the contemporary library can be understood: the commercial culture of book retailing. Libraries are designed to be welcoming, comfortable spaces that are destinations, not unlike the strategy of bookshops of selling a book-buying experience and not only books. Commercial influences on the contemporary library is evident in its décor, the arrangement of books, and the contents of the collection itself, as I explore in the following chapter.

The governmental nature of spatial design in the contemporary library thus retains some elements from earlier libraries, though there are also distinct differences. The self-governing citizen has a clear role in this examination of the library as an oligoptic space, monitoring both themselves as well as others. The library user is free to select books, use different parts of the library in various ways, and is responsible for checking out books correctly, paying fines, and following the rules and codes of conduct. The shift in responsibility for regulation from solely the librarian to both librarian and user has implications for the regulation and order and leading to my final observation. Fourth, the regulation within the library is imperfect; it is not all-encompassing. The reality of the library is more complicated and messy than what designers might intend. Rules can be broken, ignored, or unknown, particularly as there are pockets of privacy outside of the librarian’s sightline. Furniture is moved around, books get lost, copyright regulations are breached, and, sometimes, police need to be called when naked patrons are found in the stacks.
Chapter 5
Managing collections, ordering publics

Introduction

Located in the heart of Cabramatta is the Freedom Plaza, a pedestrian-only outdoor square with benches, restaurants, and shops. At one end is the Pailau Gateway, an ornate structure constructed as a symbol of multiculturalism (Fairfield City Council, n.d.a). On the adjacent streets, there are pharmacies and doctors catering to non-English speaking clients, Vietnamese and Chinese restaurants, Asian bakeries, fabric shops, and Asian grocery stores. A block over from this retail centre is a community centre, and on the next block is the Police-Citizens Youth Club (PCYC), a youth organisation.

Whitlam Library is centrally located amongst these community organisations, next to the community centre and a few minutes’ walk from the retail centre and train station. It is a grey rectangular concrete building, with prominent signage announcing its identity as a library. From the footpath, a slightly inclined path leads visitors up to the entrance: the library is elevated and set apart from the world. Inside the library, the collections are clearly and spatially delineated. The ground floor is home to three sections: children’s in the green jungle themed room, adult fiction in the orange desert-themed room, and adult’s leisure non-fiction in the blue ocean-themed room. Upstairs, the first-floor houses meeting rooms, study space, newspapers, local studies, the HSC collection, reference, and scholarly non-fiction.

The focus of this chapter is the library’s collections. My empirical focus is on Whitlam Library, though I also use the other case study libraries as examples where relevant. In an environment when the relevance of libraries and physical books are regularly questioned (for example, Rosenblum, 2013; Siegler, 2013), one might be led to ask: do libraries still even have or need books? Why? This chapter addresses these questions through the understanding of the collection—both in its entirety and its constituent parts—as a governing device.

84 This description is true of the library from mid-2013 to late 2015, the period in which this research was completed. In late 2015, the library underwent another reorganisation of its collection. The LOTE and non-fiction collections were moved upstairs and downstairs became home to more study desks.
At Whitlam Library, physical books are becoming less important to the library. Digital resources are becoming a more significant part of the collection, partly because of broader changes in digital technologies and methods of accessing information and entertainment, but also because of more specific changes in the demographics of library users at Fairfield City’s libraries. However, regardless of the collection’s material properties, whether it consists primarily of paper and ink or bits and bytes, it remains one of the top three investments by libraries alongside staff and buildings (Fairfield City Libraries, 2015).

The governing task of the collection is evident in various ways, and is the focus of the first section of this chapter as I examine the broad philosophical principles behind collection development. Library collections both in Australia and overseas have been seen as tools that can guide a public towards cultural enlightenment and self-improvement: these are not simply books on shelves; these are carefully selected books with transformative potential. I draw on work on the history of libraries and the use of collections as a governmental device (Black et al., 2009; Hornsey, 2010; Moore, 2012).

The second section shifts the focus to the more everyday behind-the-scenes processes at the heart of the reading function of the library: how books appear on library shelves. The position of the library at the intersection of civic and commercial forces is apparent here. This section is more empirical, utilising documents and data obtained from the case study libraries studied.

The Languages Other Than English (LOTE) collection clearly reflects the population served by the library. It is a way for the library and council to cater to the needs of a culturally diverse population as well as fit into a broader governmental framework of multiculturalism, education, and literacy. This is the focus of the third section. The framework guiding this section comes from geography (Forrest et al., 2006; Jupp, 2007) and library and information science (LIS) allowing for a simultaneous look at practitioner philosophies and the wider historical and geographical factors that influence library practices.

In the final section, I look more closely at the commercial forces that shape libraries. I address the issue of popular fiction and romance in the library, and consider the role of the library as a space of leisure and entertainment as well as education and learning. There is an interdisciplinary influence in this section, with the first section on book displays guided by work in retail and visual merchandising, and the second section on popular fiction and romance more influenced by cultural and literary commentators such as Carter (2009) Collins (2010), Gelder (2000, 2004) and Radway (1984).
5.1 Principles behind collection development

The collection is a fundamental material component of the library dispositif, a device with the potential to guide, influence and instruct. A contemporary practitioner volume on library collection development defines the collection as ‘the materials in all formats or genres that a library owns or to which it provides remote access, through either purchase or lease’ (Johnson, 2014, p.1). This includes printed books, electronic books, newspapers, magazines, CDs, DVDs, audiobooks, access to electronic databases, and any other items a library may lend or sell. Collection development covers:

Several activities related to the development of library collections, including selection, the determination and coordination of selection policy, assessment of the needs of users and potential users, budget management, identification of collection needs, community and user outreach and liaison, planning for resource sharing, and perhaps e-resources contract review and negotiation. (Johnson, 2014, p.1)

An important component of collection development is the establishment of the ‘core collection’. The core collection is understood as the materials that a library is expected to have or ought to have. It is a vital part of the public library that highlights its educational and cultural role. The core collection, as Alabaster (2010) explains, is comprised of the body of information of geographic places, famous and infamous people and historic events important for a culturally literate person to know. Core titles are ‘the books people assume they will find at their library’ (Alabaster, 2010, p.13), a point which was echoed by several librarians interviewed.

Behind this formalised understanding of collection development and core collections in public libraries is a longer history that dates back to early modern public libraries. In Britain, public libraries emerged in parallel to nineteenth-century liberal ideology and reform, which emphasised good citizenship, education and self-help (Black et al., 2009). Under this ideology, the state benefited from enabling citizens to be self-educated: ‘Money spent on libraries and other educational facilities would be turned into profit when set against the money that would consequently not need to be spent on controlling and containing immoral behaviour, including

85 Perhaps the most striking illustration of the core collection is the statistic quoted by Catoggio and Robertson: ‘public libraries buy approximately 80% same titles’ (2007, p.26).
criminality’ (Black et al., 2009, p.31). Libraries were thus seen as places where people could be educated in terms of information and knowledge, and as well as in morality and manners.

Books and libraries were instrumental to cultivating educated and cultured citizens, and the collections were expected to provide citizens with access to knowledge and culture. During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in the UK, librarians played a fundamental role in shaping reading lives. Rose reports, ‘Whatever their class, whether they patronized miners’ institutes or Boot’s Circulating Libraries, readers relied heavily on the advice on librarians in choosing books’ (2010, p.250). He also emphasises the importance of library acquisition policies, as for many villages the library would be the only source of books. This significance of library collections to reading lives is encapsulated in poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s letter of dissatisfaction to his local librarian:

I subscribe to your library, Mr Catcott, not to read novels, or books of quite ready and easy digestion, but to get books which I cannot get elsewhere – books of massy knowledge. (Quoted in Kelly, 1966, p.135)

Coleridge had a particular idea of what the library ought to stock, believing that books in the library were meant to be for education and learning, not frivolity, and implying that the focus should be on non-fiction material rather than fiction. This is like the mentality behind collection building in libraries in the US in the eighteenth century, where the public library was perceived as a site of enlightenment: ‘A major goal of Franklin and the Library Company was to help people improve themselves in practical ways, not just spiritual, and this motivation played itself out in the selection of books for the Library’ (Bivens-Tatum, 2012, p.97).

The role of the library evolved in the following centuries and its recreational role became more apparent. Snape reports, ‘throughout the remainder of the twentieth century the public library’s treatment of leisure changed as the social context of leisure changed’ (Snape, 2006, p.40). Snape explains that as public libraries were typically established without formally set out objectives, they evolved in response to user demands which was mainly for recreational reading, resulting in an elevation of fiction in libraries (discussed later in this chapter). Recreational reading encompasses both fiction and non-fiction, but it was this focus on leisure that cemented the place of fiction in libraries. Libraries thus became places of leisure as well as education and culture, and this too was reflected by the materials on their shelves.
These developments and expectations of libraries (and their collections) have parallels in what was happening in museums at the time, particularly in terms of elevating characteristics of art and culture. Harris reports that in the late nineteenth century, when many art museums were established in the United States, there was a crisis of ‘an impoverished national taste, a struggling and depressed class of artists, and a debased and vulgar stock of consumer goods’ (1990, p.57). Museums were supposed to elevate public taste and in doing so recoup the cost of their construction. Harris suggests that ‘public taste’ meant ‘the aesthetic knowledgeability, experience, and preferences of the entire population’—a notion reminiscent of cultural literacy. Museums were thus established not only as a means to preserve and display but also to influence the population in a particular way (see also Bennett, 1988).

The situation in Australia was similar to the first museums established in the first half of the nineteenth century, initially to further the historical interests of the elite (MacKenzie, 2009). The development of museums was not smooth, with a lack of professionalism, inadequate public support, and rapid turnover of curators. Indeed, the moment that ‘saved’ the museum was also the point that most clearly highlights the similarity between museums and libraries: Charles Nicholson, a member of the Legislative Council who was involved with the Sydney Mechanics’ School of Arts in the 1830s argued ‘the case for the power of museums to educate and uplift the broad mass of the population’ (MacKenzie, 2009, p.125). MacKenzie contends that it was the liberation from the elitist approach that saved the museum; ‘the discourse of public instruction and moral elevation would offer its prime justification’ (ibid.). These cultural institutions were thought to offer opportunities for the betterment of the masses and this belief is clear in the history and development of both libraries and museums in the nineteenth century.

The other institutions important to the development of museums and libraries in Australia, and their roles in educating and governing the population, were the Mechanics Institutes and Schools of Arts that flourished in the mid-nineteenth century (discussed in chapter one). These institutes were not under the control of municipal authorities, though they did have government support in the form of financial and land grants (Laurent, 1994). They were primarily to benefit the working classes by providing educational opportunities, access to knowledge through provision of books, journals and newspapers, and facilities for ‘wholesome entertainment’ and ‘rational recreation’ (Candy, 1994). These institutes embodied the pervasive nineteenth century values of self-improvement and ‘the perfectibility of the individual’ (Hubber, 1994, p.92). In terms of access to knowledge and reading material, these institutions were the precursor to public libraries in Australia. Although in the colonial era local governments were
not initially involved with libraries, there was a tradition of government support for literary institutions by the late 1850s as part of government provision for social goods (Hubber, 1994).

This view of the edifying effects of art, culture and literature that pervaded the nineteenth century shaped the cultural landscape of the time, although its accuracy has since been questioned. Carey’s exploration of the question, ‘do the arts make us better?’ examines the notions of arts and literature as civilising. He reports that in the nineteenth century there was a common belief that the poor would have their tastes and habits lifted and cleansed through exposure to art and culture (Carey, 2005). This assumption is interrogated and Carey concludes that where systematic research has been done on the issue, results have not shown improving outcomes from exposure to the arts.

Regardless, in the nineteenth century, then, there was a commonly-held and powerful view that cultural institutions played a key role for the improvement and betterment of the masses. One of the key institutions in this program was the library. The library’s role as a tool for improvement and education continued through the twentieth century and remains a key characteristic of libraries now. Specifically, the collection held an important task of bettering and civilising the library users. Haines made explicit the role of the library in the provision for self-education:

The province and purpose of the public library is to provide for every person the education obtainable through reading. This does not mean education in any narrow or formalized sense but, rather, the culture of mind and spirit that books can diffuse in life. (Haines, 1935, p.15)

This provision for informal learning and enhancing the mind and body espoused by Haines is especially evident in the library’s non-fiction holdings. Haines’ view that libraries ought to be a place of general and informal learning is clear in the way librarians now speak of the role of the library and especially in the way non-fiction collections are curated. The idea pervasive in the early public libraries that the library’s collection ought to enable self-improvement continues in the contemporary public library, a notion especially clear in the provision of books for

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86 However, on the topic of literature, Carey concedes that while it may not make you a better person, ‘it may help you criticize what you are … it enlarges your mind, and it gives you thoughts, words and rhythms that will last you for life’ (2005, p.260)—a rather positive view of literature’s effects.
practical learning such as English literacy, do-it-yourself, craft, gardening, cooking, and other factual material—that is, the non-fiction part of the library, whether it is ‘leisure’ non-fiction or ‘scholarly’ non-fiction. Furthermore, there is a gender division in this understanding of books and libraries for education, with men tending to read more for the purposes of learning than women, a pattern examined in chapter seven.

As I discuss elsewhere in this thesis, the effectiveness and contribution of libraries are calculated against various metrics, and this includes their success in enabling self-learning. This focus on metrics is not always necessarily useful. In ‘The Library Book’, Bathurst recounts this story:

[The council] asked us for an assessment of outcomes, not output. Output was how many books we’d stamped out, and outcome was something that had actually resulted from someone borrowing a book. So say someone took out a book on mending cars and then drove the car back, that’s an outcome, or made a batch of scones from a recipe book they’d borrowed. It lasted until one of the librarians told the council they’d had someone in borrowing a book on suicide, but that they’d never brought it back. The council stopped asking after that (Collins, in Bathurst, 2012, p.79-80).

However, despite the lack of easy or accurate ways of measuring the impact of library collections on general education and learning, as the above example demonstrates, they were thought to be powerful devices that can affect readers’ minds and lives. This was especially true in earlier libraries in the twentieth century, as illustrated by the case of censorship.

The issue of censorship highlights the authority of the state in determining what books are available to whom, how the library fits within this broader governmental infrastructure. and, significantly, it illustrates the view that the collection itself wields an ability to influence. Hornsey reports on the significance of censorship in the establishment of the library as a governing tool in London after World War II. Libraries in post-war London used censorship to assure the library’s position as a ‘collective amenity that provided every metropolitan citizen with access to a universal archive of culture and information’ (Hornsey, 2010, p.170), and friction occurred between the ideology of the library as a democratic and civilising space and the stocking of ephemeral books. He recounts:
The act of reading was understood as directional, progressing in an obvious line from the transient pleasures of immature ephemera to the deeper enjoyment of more timeless works. (Hornsey, 2010, p.175)

The borrower as a citizen would be led, through regular use of the library and its collections, to cultural enlightenment. But this goal can be diverted.

Trouble arose in the 1950s when Penguin announced its plans to release a paperback edition of D. H. Lawrence’s *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* that would have a cover similar to other titles in the Penguin Classics series, thereby creating potential confusion by cloaking a salacious paperback in a sombre cover. The primary concern here was not the text itself but rather that it was marketed to look like a classic rather than a ‘lewd’ paperback and thus potentially misleading good citizen readers. Penguin was charged with obscenity by the Crown Prosecution Service, though it was later acquitted. This case highlights the notion of ‘proper reading’ that pervaded publishing and libraries, and makes clear the notion of the collection as a governmental device: the books contained within hold the power to instruct, influence, and potentially deceive and lead astray.

Censorship can also affect library collections without occurring in the library. It can be a more overt practice with the state outright banning materials, as happened in twentieth century Australia. Rather than taking court action over a deceptive cover, books were banned for their content and prevented from entering the country. Moore (2012) examines the history of Australian book censorship from the 1920s to the 1980s, exploring a reference library of 793 boxes of books that had been banned by the Customs department and other government agencies. Books were banned for a multitude of reasons, and Australian readers were divided into groups by censorship authorities. The way these groups were described illustrates the pervading view that books had an influential power. Moore explains:

There was the ‘responsible’ reader, closest to the censors themselves in his (definitely his) ability to read with rational dispassion, employing his expertise … a ‘good’ reader whose

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87 These included including insufficient literary merit; containing obscenity, blasphemy, or sedition; containing birth control, contraceptive or abortion information; causing offence to religious organisations; or including homosexual themes or sexual perversion (Moore, 2012).
elitism was important. … Women remained at once the primary object of obscenity and the majority of readers … Minor readers were another crucial category, materialising properly in the middle decades of the century as literacy rates lifted … [and] ‘sexually unstable’ readers [who were] adult readers regarded as especially vulnerable to deviance, liable to lapse into homosexuality or worse if unprotected. (Moore, 2012, p.342)

These reader divisions and reasons for banning books highlight the role of reading in influencing morality and character; books were prohibited from being imported into the country if they were thought to lead readers away from a path of civility and proper conduct. Libraries were not directly involved in this censorship process, and indeed libraries no longer engage in such overt censorship practices, but the sentiments behind what is considered suitable reading are echoed in collection development policies and principles.

In contemporary libraries, the role of the collection as a device and resource for learning and education remains, as indicated by the earlier anecdote about ‘outcomes versus outputs’. Despite difficulty in measuring the level of impact on the education of library users, the library’s collection is nevertheless viewed as a key tool for instruction and study that works alongside other educational institutions. It is particularly important in places where schools may be under resourced, such as the case of Whitlam Library. Librarian B explained the importance of the public library to students:

*The volume of students, the range of students … looked on the public library here in Fairfield as fairly critical to their information needs because although we have a lot of schools and a lot of students, the resources in those schools were pretty poor.*

Librarian C, also from Whitlam Library, likewise emphasised the educational role of the library:

*A lot of our students, even uni students, just come and use our space to study. And do nothing else. So in terms of collection development and collection, I think we need to be able to meet the study needs of our community. … Our motto is lifelong learning. And lifelong learning covers all your aspects of life. It’s not just education. It’s not just literacy, it’s empowering and enabling your community to have access to information, to have access to the ability to improve themselves, to be able to get a job, to have computers for them to do their homework, look up information, write their resume, be able to go to interviews, to have classes where they can get basic English for free.*
Librarian C’s comments about lifelong learning and the role of the library as a place for general and informal learning that supplements formal education are reminiscent of the sentiments and rationales behind the establishment of early public libraries and their collections, reinforcing the governmental role of the library. Although the public library’s mission has been expanded to meet recreational and leisure needs of their users, education and learning remains a fundamental element of what they do. Collections are generally developed with these philosophies in mind.

The core collection, which I suggest is a separate device from the collection more generally within the library dispositif, is particularly important to the governmental role of the library. Librarian G from Narellan Library explained:

You have to have a core collection, be it fiction or non-fiction, of good quality literature and from the non-fiction point of view, a collection of books that will give you good factual information right across the range of subjects. They may not be borrowed very much, but you should have them. That’s what a library’s expected to have.

She elaborated on that point, saying that factual information on a range of subjects is only one layer to the depth of the collection. She added:

Then there’s another layer where you’ve got to give people the books that are on the bestseller list, that are being publicised at the moment. And then there’s a third layer of depth of collection. So you have, not only you have depth of intellectual content but also across a range of times.

Librarian G explained that having content across a range of time periods was important as it allows the library to present ‘a range of ideas because different authors will present different opinions or they will report on, say in scientific terms, the status at the time’ and she argued that a library needs this depth of collection in order to distinguish itself from a bookshop: ‘We’re more than a bookshop and if you’re only presenting the latest and the bestsellers, then you’re no better than a bookshop.’ For Librarian G, the library is an institution is a place of knowledge and learning, distinct from the commercial space of the bookshop, though the two may look similar at first glance. The library through its collection retains a role in shaping reading for goals other than profit such as education and research. This distinction between a library and a bookshop highlights the significance of the library collection as a device constructed with governmental philosophies in mind, as opposed to the stock list of a bookshop which is often developed with more profit-driven motivations.
Another important consideration in collection development is local content. Many librarians interviewed in this research spoke about prioritising Australian content in their collections. Librarian J, when she was describing the comedy DVD collection at Lane Cove Library, commented on the importance of holding Australian comedians or comedians who regularly tour in Australia: ‘I think a lot of librarians have this thing that, you know, while you collect international stuff, you tend to try and do Australian, because that’s our culture you know?’ She added, ‘You sort of think, if we don’t support it, then it disappears.’

Librarian J’s comment highlights the fluidity and contingent nature of the library dispositif: there is no singular body mandating what belongs in library collections but rather a series of policies, guidelines, and philosophies of individual librarians. Not every library will have as comprehensive a selection of DVDs of Australian comedians as Lane Cove Library.

Although there is no single governing authority that dictates what proportion of library collections ought to be local materials, there is still a governmental component to this part of collection development. The availability of Australian material that public librarians support is made possible in part because of various state instruments and initiatives such as support for publishing and Public Lending Right and Education Lending Right schemes. Australian literary culture is a complex network with flows between the state, publishers, retailers, libraries, and the producers and consumers of literary and cultural goods. The public library is both a producer and consumer in this network.

These expectations of library collections as catering to demands for education, leisure and the preservation and promotion of local materials are closely related to how librarians and library users define ‘library’, and what they expect the library to be. Librarian B, the collections librarian at Whiltam Library, argued that the collection ‘is the most important ingredient that goes into the makeup of a public library’. He explained:

88 Multiple instruments are used at all three levels of government to support publishing, writing, and literary culture in Australia. The government supports the industry by promoting ‘both a national literature and a national audience’ (Carter and Ferres, 2001, p.141). In 2009-10, for example, the Australian Government provided $34.8 million in funding for literature and print media, while state and territory governments provided $14.0 million (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2012).

89 The Public Lending Right and Education Lending Right are Australian government schemes that ‘make payments to eligible Australian creators and publishers in recognition that income is lost through the free multiple use of their books in public and educational lending libraries’ (Australian Government Ministry for the Arts, n.d.)
I’d say that without a substantive base for your knowledge which you are offering to the public you are a shell of a building which has got people in it, furniture and equipment but it’s not offering anything else and something that might set themselves up down the road as perhaps a library, or a document resource centre.

For Librarian B, the collection is fundamental to what a library is. A library has books, and a library contains knowledge, because without them it is no different from a community centre. The library’s mission from its inception in the nineteenth century as a place of self-improvement, learning and knowledge therefore remains—but it now sits alongside other imperatives such as providing what users demand.

This point about providing what users demand is pertinent. This assessment of the collection as a tool for education and influence, and an important component of the library’s identity retains some truth in the contemporary library. However, this educational aspect of the library and its collection is no longer at the forefront. Rather, the importance of metrics, funding and circulation figures have pushed the need to please users higher up on the priority list (as I examine later in this chapter). Librarians may have a certain belief that the collection is for lifelong learning, and this still definitely holds an element of truth but the role of collection as instructing tool ought not to be overstated.

5.2 Collection development processes

The collection development policy is an important governing device which outlines the procedures and rationale behind how and what kinds of materials are bought. The processes of collection development vary across libraries but are typically structured on common principles. Alabaster writes, ‘one of the cardinal rules of collection development is to be impartial, to avoid purchases based on your personal interests, prejudices, religious beliefs, or opinions’ (2010, p.26). Librarians are players within the state apparatus of the library and their authority in making collection development decisions and adhering to these principles stem from their professional identity, as discussed in chapter one. Other instruments such as official documentation with council approval aid the process. Whitlam Library’s collection process is guided by its collection management policy, a document that is, according to Librarian B:

"Structured in such a way that it is very much a political document which you can show, make available to
the public, to show that you are meeting the criteria, ethical, political, and literary standards, in terms of how you build a collection.

He explained that the written policy ‘takes it away from a personal-based approach to a professional-based approach ... So it's covering the library, the council, to ethically operate and evaluate how to build a collection.’

These explanations from Librarian B parallel Alabaster’s assertion that one of the central rules of collection development is impartiality. His comments about the policy being a political document indicates these devices can be seen as strategic instruments and allow for transparency and accountability in the librarians’ actions. This policy is also an important discursive element of the library dispositif that links the librarian with the collection; it is a key component in the construction of the library. The publicly available Collection Management Policy states as its purpose:

[Provide] guidance for the librarians to achieve consistency in the selection of materials collection, to define for staff, users, administration, Council and the public the scope of the existing collection and to inform the public of the principles upon which the decisions are made when adding material to the collection. (Fairfield City Council, 2003, p.1)

Documents 5.1 and 5.2 show the contents pages of Fairfield City Library’s 2011 collection development policy. The range of issues covered by the policy includes donations, second-hand items and lost or damaged items. In terms of the specific criteria for selecting material, the policy states that potential items need to be evaluated for qualities such as currency, quality of writing, suitability, relevance to the Fairfield community, price, accessibility of information, availability in a variety of formats in English and other languages, suitability of subject, insight into human and social conditions, reputation of author and publisher, demand for material, Australian or local content, and the availability of other books in the subject already in the collection.

These qualities are not merely objective measures by which librarians evaluate books; they also emphasise the function of this document as a governmental device. The importance of

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90 The library’s website displays its older Collection Management Policy. This details the same issues in the newer Collection Development Policy, which is not publicly available.
quality and currency of information reinforces the library’s position as a trusted source of information and knowledge sanctioned by the state. The emphasis on local or Australian content highlights the library’s role as a cultural institution that holds some responsibility for the preservation of local knowledge and culture.
The policy is comprehensive, covering broader missions of the library, profiles of the communities served by the library, as well as smaller details such as customer requests for new titles. The aims and objectives of the policy are listed as:

Purchase what our customers want
Provide a broad collection that expresses all viewpoints
Satisfy the information, recreational needs of our community
Builds [sic] a collection that enhances the role and function of the public library in the community
Provide outline of a disaster plan and implementation (Fairfield City Library Collections and Assets, 2011)

These highlight the importance of responding to community needs, contrasting with a philosophy where the librarian imposed what she thought was best. Furthermore, the inclusion
of Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) policy statements in the appendix shows the professionalism of collection development—there are institutional structures behind these policies and they are not merely the whims of an individual. Document 5.3 reveals the profile for Whitlam Library, another element of the collection development policy.

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<th>BRANCH PROFILES</th>
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<td>Fairfield City Library Service has five Branches; The Whitlam Library at Cabramatta is the Central Library with branches at Bonnyrigg, Fairfield, Smithfield and Wetherill Park. The Library serves a diverse clientele as is shown in the Branch Profiles Below:</td>
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### 7.1 THE WHITLAM LIBRARY – CABRAMATTA BRANCH

**Branch:**

**THE WHITLAM LIBRARY - CABRAMATTA**

**Location:**

The Whitlam Library is on Railway Parade, Cabramatta. The library is located near a railway station and transit hub for buses.

**Customers:** (Describe Clientele)

The branch is highly multicultural, with community language collections including:

- Arabic
- Croatian
- Cambodian
- Chinese
- Lao
- Russian
- Serbian
- Spanish
- Thai
- Vietnamese

Whitlam Library is heavily used by school students outside school hours as well as university students living locally. Some customers come to use the collections, while others come to use other facilities such as the newspapers, computers or reading space. The paid and free computer services are well used, with computers most heavily used from about 3.00pm until near closing. The user demographics indicates that there is still a high "youth" component, though this may change in the future.

**Core Collections:**

- Community language collections in Arabic, Chinese, Spanish, Italian, Thai, Lao, Russian, Vietnamese
- Croatian & Serbian Language collections.
- Adult and Children’s Fiction
- Adult and Children’s Non-Fiction
- Periodicals
- DVDs
- Best sellers
- Reference – the main reference collection is held at Whitlam
- HSC collection
- Local Studies collection including Local Area Reports and Local and Sydney Newspapers in either print or microform.
- Stack Library; Collection of Council Business Papers, Records and Government Gazette.

**Popular Collections:**

The most popular nonfiction areas are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paranormal and Astrology</th>
<th>Home Economics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English Language</td>
<td>Geography and Travel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>Australian History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>Personal Finance/Investing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Home Improvement</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self Improvement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Document 5.3 Profile of the Whitlam Library (Cabramatta) from the Fairfield City Library Collection Development Policy
This profile indicates the way the demographic data (discussed in chapter three) is used when formulating a collection development policy.

The collection development policy is not the sole device guiding the selection process. In many public libraries, books are purchased through library suppliers. At Fairfield and Camden Library Services, they have profiles with the suppliers that provide a demographic snapshot of the community and the types of books required. The profiles provide information about the physical size of each library, the size of the collection, the users of the library, the unique qualities of each branch, and the most heavily used collections. Document 5.4 shows a supplier profile for Whitlam Library, and includes information such as the most popular languages other than English spoken by its users, the patterns and demography of use (‘heavily used by students outside school hours … most computers heavily used from 3pm until closing’), the differences between Whitlam Library and the other branches in the library service, and the most popular genres and subjects in its fiction and non-fiction collections. The profile paints a portrait of the library for the supplier and enables them to tailor their collection selections for the library.
The library has standing orders that automatically deliver certain books, such as all titles by a particular author. The supplier processes and catalogues the books according to the library’s
specifications, including tasks such as covering books with protective plastic, adding barcode and call number stickers, and creating library catalogue entries.\textsuperscript{91}

The use of suppliers has consequences for the collection’s governing role. The discussion so far has suggested that librarians are the sole arbiters of the library’s collection, and in libraries where supplier profiles are not used, such as Lane Cove Library, there is certainly more truth to that. However, for many libraries using supplier profiles, the power in deciding the collection’s contents is shared between librarians and suppliers. The curation power shifts from within the library to an external commercial organisation. While the librarians have the ultimate authority in determining whether a title will be purchased, the development of the list itself is no longer entirely in their control; they may not necessarily be aware of which titles are missing, pointing to what is unsaid within the library dispositif.

Library suppliers are not the only source of books for many libraries, including Fairfield City. Bookshops are used to supplement the suppliers’ selections, further highlighting the intersection between public libraries and the commercial industries of book publishing and retailing. Librarian B explained his reasons for choosing to buy a small portion of the collection from bookshops rather than sourcing entirely from library suppliers:

The bookshop is supplying to a completely different market in the way that it operates from the public library market. Its market is someone who will come into their shop, be dazzled by the product they’ve got on offer, and just like any good commodity, they’ll want to take it off the shelf, exchange money, and walk out the door. What we put on the shelf in the public library we never think we have to totally dazzle the person and they have to walk out the door and pay for it. ... It’s the market that we think we have to quietly succeed with over a lifetime, an enjoyable understanding and experience of the value, long-term.\textsuperscript{92}

He buys from bookshops because there may be different books promoted that might not be on a library supplier’s radar due to the different audiences of bookshops and libraries. He also buys books for particular collections from bookshops if they have a wider variety than the library

\textsuperscript{91} The Collections and Assets Profiles (Suppliers) document for Fairfield in 2012 stated the only items not processed by the supplier and to be done in-house were items for the reference, HSC, local history, and graphic novel collections.

\textsuperscript{92} Librarian B speaks about the need for bookshops to ‘dazzle’, which is different to the library, but as discussed later in this chapter, libraries are now having to similarly ‘dazzle’ their users.
suppliers. The relationship between libraries and bookshops is not the most important one in terms of collection development, but it does highlight the position of the library as one node in a wider reading network.

The other case study libraries also purchase from bookshops, although the proportion of the collection purchased from bookshops has decreased since the use of library suppliers became more widespread. Librarian E, a senior librarian at Narellan Library, explained the shift in purchasing from bookshops to library suppliers: ‘[Bookshops] would have been a much more important supplier in the past but the way selection goes now and the move towards outsourcing and streamlining everything as much as possible, they’re not a major supplier anymore.’ Narellan Library purchases from six to eight library suppliers, and even the way those purchases are made have changed. Previously, the suppliers would deliver books to the library for the librarians to inspect and select, but now the process shifted to the use of supplier profiles.

Lane Cove Library’s collection development contrasts with Fairfield and Narellan. They also purchase the bulk of their books from library suppliers but instead of the profiling system, the librarians select the books. Library suppliers bring a large selection of books to the library every six to eight weeks, and various librarians will make purchases for the collection from these books. Librarian J explained the process:

We have a collection development guideline, which say we’re going to collect in these areas. But, um, you know, it’s, I mean, libraries say it’s very hands on, but we divide it across the library. Like, Karen does fiction and non-fiction, Will does reference, um, Jillian does large print, um, Helen does junior, I do, um, CDs, DVDs and audio books.

An advantage of doing selection in-house is the librarians retain a greater control over collection development and they are able to see a wider range of titles—they know what they are not buying as well as what they are buying.

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93 Kinokuniya, a large bookshop in Sydney, is particularly strong for cooking, travel, design, art, graphic novels, and children’s hardcover picture books, so those collections at Fairfield are supplemented by purchases from there.

94 Cataloguing is also completed in-house at Lane Cove Library. Lane Cove is part of Shorelink, a consortium of five public libraries on the lower north shore in Sydney (Shorelink, n.d.) and they engage in co-operative cataloguing. The first library in the group to receive the book catalogues it and the entry is shared. This reduces the cataloguing done by each library and has the advantage of keeping cataloguing skills in-house.
The demands of users act as a driving force in this entanglement of commercial operators and state authority. Circulation figures and visitor numbers are important metrics by which a library is measured, resulting in a situation where user demands are catered for, sometimes even if it contradicts the library’s loftier aims of being a place of knowledge and information. I discuss this tension later in this chapter on the topic of popular fiction and romance in libraries, but here I note two processes that indicate the library user’s influence. First, in many libraries, including the three libraries studied here, users can make requests for certain titles. The policies are generally to buy the title unless it is an expensive specialist item such as an academic text, or if it is old. Second, library catalogue systems allow users to reserve books if they are on loan, and librarians will look at the number of reserves a title has and use those figures to assess whether additional copies will be purchased.

There is therefore a market imperative to the library’s operations, and the library can be understood as positioned between different types of spaces: civic and commercial. The input of the user in shaping the library’s collection exemplifies this interchange and it also indicates a different kind of governance, where rather than power exercised from above, the community itself has influence; power is dispersed. The presence of these commercial actors in the collection development process emphasises the role of the library not merely as a state organ built to influence the population, but rather a complex and heterogeneous institution that serves many publics, embodies numerous functions, and is acted on by multiple contingent forces.

5.3 Providing for culturally diverse populations

The influence of library users and the local community served by the library is clear in the ‘languages other than English’ (LOTE) collection. This collection can be considered a governmental device that helps ease immigration settlement that is less formal than official governmental agencies, services and structures. Librarians recognise the need to provide materials that meet the needs of culturally diverse populations, and the proportion of LOTE materials compared with English titles typically mirror the demographics of the library’s users. Cooper argues that ‘languages, oral traditions, music, dance, social practices, rituals and festive events are among some of the vehicles of intangible cultural heritage’ and that ‘public libraries play an important role in ensuring they stay alive’ (2008, p.28). Public libraries fulfil this role in through their collections and services.
This recognition of the role libraries play in preserving cultural heritage and collecting materials for a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) community is situated in a broader context of immigration policy in Australia. Ideologies have changed over time, from the White Australia policy in the 1880s, where white Caucasians were seen as superior to other races to immigration policies from the 1960s that favoured diversity (Jupp, 2007; Markus et al., 2009). There were three main phases of policy and attitudes towards diversity: assimilation95, integration96 and multiculturalism (Forrest et al., 2006).

Multicultural policy influences library collections today. Acevedo and Bresnahan report that ‘all NSW government agencies are guided by the four principles of multiculturalism’ (2005, p.61). These principles confirm the right of individuals to ‘fully contribute and participate in the life of the state; respect the culture, language and religion of others; have access to government services; and have the linguistic and cultural assets in NSW recognised and promoted’ (Acevedo and Bresnahan, 2005, p.61-62).

Local councils in NSW are required to support these principles by developing specifically targeted initiatives for people from CALD backgrounds. Jupp explains that as part of the move towards multiculturalism, various government programs and agencies were put in place to assist with immigrant settlement (Jupp, 2001). It is within this policy and legislative context that public libraries in NSW build their LOTE collections. LOTE collections and programs such as English Conversation Classes are devices that further the state’s promotion of multiculturalism. These elements of library services highlight the interconnectedness of different levels of government, and the role of the library in fulfilling some of the local municipality’s responsibilities regarding multiculturalism.

The development of the Languages Other Than English (LOTE) collection depends on availability and practicality. In another example of different levels of government working together to provide library services for a culturally diverse population, the State Library of NSW (SLNSW) ‘collects and catalogues library materials for loan to public library clients’ (Acevedo and Bresnahan, 2005, p.63). This service and collection was developed because many rural or

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95 Assimilation is a disputed term but broadly meant adopting the customs of the host country and behaving in such a way as to not attract attention. It referred to both physical appearance and cultural behaviour and was popular from the 1950s until the late 1960s (Jupp, 2007)

96 Integration was ‘an expectation that newcomers would become part of the host society without necessarily losing their separate identity’ (Forrest et al., 2006, p.444).
regional libraries do not have large enough CALD populations to justify their own LOTE collections, yet access for a minority of users is still required. Figure 5.1 shows German books at Lane Cove Library that are part of the SLNSW collection, as indicated by the call sticker.
Libraries with larger CALD communities purchase titles for their LOTE collections. Whitlam Library has a significant LOTE collection. In 2015, the LOTE collection comprised 24.4 per cent of the total collection across the Fairfield library system (Fairfield City Libraries, 2015) and includes English bestsellers that have been translated, as seen in Figure 5.2.

Smaller languages can be difficult to acquire. Khmer is a language in demand at Whitlam Library due to the local Cambodian population but books are less readily available. Relatively few books are published in Khmer, and what is published is often of poor quality. Librarian B commented that the Cambodian publishing industry is still experiencing the effects of the Khmer Rouge regime in the 1970s, making it difficult to source Cambodian books and other materials. Similarly, Henczel reports that with LOTE materials, ‘print runs are relatively short; quality varies significantly from publisher to publisher and … non-fiction content and fiction genre vary from language to language as a reflection of community interests and literacy standards’ (2003, p.142).

Another difficulty in developing LOTE collections concerns the amount of languages spoken by the community. Librarian A explained:
We have a lot of minority groups and when does it become a significant enough group to purchase for them? One of our biggest issues at the moment are all the African communities coming in, but it's not easy because their languages, there are so many of them.

Various strategies are used to build LOTE collections and mitigate these difficulties, such as the collection by the SLNSW. Even smaller ventures exist. Hall describes WESCOL (Western Sydney Cooperating Libraries), a partnership between the Auburn, Bankstown, Fairfield and Liverpool libraries. These libraries share a rotating collection of three significant community languages: Arabic, Chinese and Vietnamese (Hall, 2009, p.18).

The LOTE collection at Whitlam Library reflects the local population: in the Fairfield LGA, only 26 percent of the population only spoke English at home (profile.id, 2011h) and in the suburb of Cabramatta that figure drops to 11.7 per cent (profile.id, 2011i). Bourke reports, ‘Fairfield City is one of the most diverse communities in the country with 144 languages spoken and 72.5% of the population speaking a language other than English at home’ (2009, p.18). This diversity is visible not only in the collection, but also in the staff and the events. Bourke writes, ‘A recent staff survey showed that 57.1% of staff speak a language other than English and about the same percentage were born overseas’ (ibid.) As I mentioned in chapter three, their events program include activities such as English Conversation Classes and homework centres.

The library’s support for education and literacy highlights the position of the library as a municipal instrument at the nexus of public education. This is however different to the nineteenth sense of citizens using it for self-improvement. The elements that I have suggested are instruments within a dispositif such as the LOTE collection and literacy programs are not formal governmental devices from higher levels of the state. Rather, they are informal instruments developed within the library system, at the local government level, and sit alongside more formal agencies and programs in creating an environment supporting multiculturalism. The library is part of a network of educational institutions and governmental departments involved in the promotion of multiculturalism, and it supports the integration all residents, regardless of language background, into a broader English-speaking community.
Related to the issue of LOTE collections and serving culturally diverse communities is the position of Indigenous culture, knowledge and materials in public libraries. At national and state levels, Indigenous materials are held in collections at the National Library of Australia, the National Archives of Australia, and the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (Nakata et al., 2005). The SLNSW houses InfoKoori, an index to the Koori Mail which is a fortnightly newspaper focusing on Indigenous peoples (State Library of New South Wales, 2010). Special collections can also exist in university libraries.

In public libraries, special collections may exist in local history collections, and a matter of concern is providing adequate access to the materials. Nakata et al. (2005) report that some public libraries will shelve Indigenous collections separately and others will use flag stickers to identify materials shelved (such as at Narellan Library, as seen in Figure 5.3).

Figure 5.3 Aboriginal flag sticker on books related to Indigenous culture at Narellan Library

97 In 1995, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Protocols for Libraries, Archives and Information Services (‘the Protocols’) were published by the Library and Information Science (LIS) sector and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Library and Information Resource Network (Nakata et al., 2005). The Protocols provide guidelines for the LIS sector, including organisations such as archives, libraries and museums on appropriate practices for addressing Indigenous information issues.
Some public libraries use outreach strategies to encourage Indigenous people to use the library such as story-telling sessions and establishing Indigenous liaison positions. In areas with high indigenous populations, the library can be an important site for education and leisure (Blackburn, 2010).

These collections serving culturally diverse populations are influenced by state policies and mandates from the SLNSW that influence public library operations. In the following section, I turn my focus to other forces bearing on library collections.

5.4 Commercial influences in the library

5.4.1 Displaying books

The position of the library at the interchange of commercial and civic spaces is obvious in the shelving of books. In this section, my concern is not with the order in which books are arranged, as it was in the previous chapter, but instead with the commercial influences on their display. Hennah, a visual merchandising expert and library consultant, believes that libraries should be ‘destinations’. He advises librarians to think like their customers, and advocates transforming libraries to be more like bookshops in shelving, displays, and décor (Hennah, n.d.).

These ideas about creating destinations and the ethos of putting user needs at the forefront of classification decisions have been around for some time. Sapiie (1995) summarised the literature from 1980 on the use of reader-interest classification, where classification was simple and intended to reflect the interests of the reader rather than the subject contents of the book. She found that an early recorded use of this system was found at the Detroit Public Library in 1945, and that this kind of organisation increased circulation figures. This classification style is typically seen in bookshops.

Despite the popularity of shelving by genre and subject, there are concerns with this method. Maker (2008) outlined problems with the system, suggesting genre shelving can lead to more confusion than clarity. Some concerns include ambiguity in terms of where certain books or authors would be shelved, inconsistent classification of titles, and alienating some users. His main argument is that libraries have a different mission to bookshops—highlighting the tension between the needs of a commercial space and the needs of a civic space—and the way bookshops and libraries classify books will be different, such as some bookshops dividing fiction into ‘popular fiction’ and ‘Literature’ while libraries tend not to make such a distinction.
This attention to shelving and display is reminiscent of the move towards visual merchandising techniques in other cultural institutions, namely in American museums in the post-war era (Harris, 1990). In writing about museums, merchandising and popular taste, Harris notes that apart from expositions and fairs, the other competitor to the museum in the display of artefacts was the department store. He noted ‘merchandising that maximized physical comfort and exploited the dramatic possibilities of empty space and selectivity’ (1990, pp.73-4).

The focus on selectivity and display, inspired by department stores, is similar to book displays in bookshops and libraries. As part of my research on independent bookshops in 2008, I asked independent booksellers about strategies they used to compete with chains and online retailers. One common response was the creation of an inviting and comfortable atmosphere through décor and layout that encouraged browsing and lingering. One bookseller revealed:

It took three years for the shop to look like this, and it was a big decision to make, to put in lounges in such a small space, but in fact this concept makes me more money than the shelves would . . . The ability for people to sit here and look at the range of books more often than not results in multiple purchases. (Li, 2010, p.257)

Likewise, libraries now show greater consciousness regarding the way books are arranged and displayed, highlighting the influence of commercial practices on these public reading spaces. Although libraries do not have the same profit-driven imperative as a bookshop, the importance of metrics and circulation figures means libraries are increasingly searching for ways to attract readers and borrowers—like bookshops, they now also have to ‘dazzle’ the user. The effectiveness of the collection and indeed the library itself as a governmental device relies on its use; a library unvisited or a collection unread does not govern or survive. As such, strategies from retail sectors are frequently adopted.

Various guides for bookshop merchandising recommend strategies such as creating enticing displays, utilising end-caps (the ends of shelves), using themes as a method of promotion, and mixing up lighting (Peterson, 2014; Ray, 2015; Tice, 2012). Many of these strategies are evident in public libraries. The material elements involved in these strategies such

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98 The influence of the commercial sector is also evident in the language used by librarians, referring to library users as ‘customers’ which implies a private business transaction.
as book displays and promotional signage are devices used to affect behaviour and promote certain authors, titles or subjects—the act of governing in the library is not always directly focused on leading readers to the ‘right’ books through devices such as reading groups and literacy resources, but can involve more simple acts such as using shelving and displays to promote themes or events.

One retail technique that has been widely used by libraries is book displays. These are material components of the library dispositif that serve a governing purpose, intended to publicise certain titles or subjects. Rippel (2003) suggests using book displays, booklists, and attractive and clear signage in public libraries, which are also strategies advocated by Hennah. All three case study libraries use book displays to showcase books related to particular themes, as well as using signage to indicate where specific collections are kept. Figure 5.4 depicts the new book display in the lounge area at Whitlam Library and Figure 5.5 shows a tea themed book display at Narellan Library, created to celebrate a national fundraiser, Australia’s Biggest Morning Tea.

![Figure 5.4 Book display at Whitlam Library](image-url)
Figure 5.5 Tea themed book display at Narellan Library
The use of outward facing books\(^{99}\) is also seen at all three libraries, a technique used to promote particular titles commonly seen in bookshops and can increase circulation (Camacho et al., 2014) (Figure 5.6).

![Figure 5.6 Outward facing books at Whitlam Library](image)

The placement of limited books with their covers out is similar to the selectivity and use of space in museum, department store and bookshop displays, highlighting the influence of commercial merchandising techniques on public libraries. Furthermore, this exemplifies the priority of circulation over large collections: the shelf on the right of Figure 5.6 holds significantly fewer books than the other shelves in the image. It has become more important for the library to lend rather than hold. As I mentioned in chapter four, this indicates a level of power transference from the librarian to the library user and bookseller and publisher—the content and display of library collections are no longer the result of a librarian with complete authority; other forces also act on library collections. However, the power has not wholly shifted from the librarian to

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\(^{99}\) As opposed to spine-only visible shelving.
the patron and marketer. There remains a fundamental difference between bookshops and libraries, regardless of shelving and signage techniques.

Bookshops, despite some booksellers seeing themselves as purveyors of culture and books as having greater value than the mere economic (Miller, 2006), are profit-driven enterprises. By contrast, libraries are public institutions that have a different mission focused on serving a local community’s cultural, educational, and leisure needs. However, there still is a degree of intersection between commercial spaces and public spaces in the public library, which is clear in the ways books are selected, ordered and displayed. The issue of commercialisation and the market in the library is particularly stark when discussing popular fiction\(^\text{100}\).

5.4.2 Debating culture: Popular fiction versus Literature

ALIA recommends that libraries should, as part of their information services role, offer a readers’ advisory service. This is where:

Knowledgeable, non-judgemental library staff help readers with their leisure reading needs. With a focus on the reader’s tastes and requirements, the readers’ adviser uses his/her knowledge of fiction and non-fiction material, reference tools, and familiarity with the library collection to help the reader answer questions such as ‘What do I read next?’ (Australian Library and Information Association, 2012, p.33)

This is an important part of customer service and librarians are trained specifically in readers’ advisory. This expectation that librarians be knowledgeable in a range of genres and be able and willing to help library users with their leisure reading is a departure from the attitudes towards fiction in early public libraries.

Although fiction is now an important part of a public library’s collection, in the nineteenth century in Britain’s public libraries, fiction was seen as inappropriate material for a

\(^{100}\) The tension between commercial and public in the library was highlighted in 2013, when popular children’s author Terry Deary argued that ‘libraries have had their day’, suggesting that the idea of allowing anyone to read books for free is an outdated concept (Clark, 2013; Flood, 2013). He remarked that other products are not distributed for free and libraries are not contributing to the book industry; authors, booksellers and publishers need to earn a living. His comments were opposed by fellow authors and others in the book industry (Bowie-Sell, 2013; Flood, 2013).
library to lend. A library was supposed to provide educational and improving books, not fiction. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, novel-reading was thought to be a ‘predominantly feminine activity, something ‘light’ and ‘frivolous’ (Hammond, 2002, p.85). Furthermore, the reading of ‘ephemeral fiction’ was frequently likened to alcohol addiction and thought to ‘soften the mind and make it impervious to better things’ (Hammond, 2002, p.92).

It is against this backdrop that a prejudice against fiction in libraries developed in early British public libraries (Sturges and Barr, 1992). However, Sturges and Barr also observe that, despite the librarians’ reluctance to promote fiction, readership was high. They cite an article from 1890 which, using a survey of 25 libraries in England and Scotland, found that average fiction issue was 74 per cent of total issues (Mason, 1890, in Sturges and Barr, 1992, p.23). Regardless, fiction was perceived to be ‘dissipating and valueless’ (Kay, 1880 in Sturges and Barr, 1992, p.24) and librarians would actively attempt to reduce the proportion of fiction lending.

In Australian public libraries in the 1930s and 1940s, fiction was treated differently to non-fiction. There were charges for borrowing fiction, a practice that McColvin criticised. He objected to payment for fiction for several reasons: good novels have educational and cultural value; the public library ought to be stocking its fiction collection wisely and not be positioning itself at the level of a commercial lending library101; public libraries are funded by ratepayers and so should stock what they wish to read; recreational reading has inherent value (McColvin, 1947, pp.72-74). His comments suggest that librarians in post-war Australia did not rate fiction highly, but also that there was another institution for access to fiction—the commercial library. These positions on fiction taken by the early public libraries contrast with attitudes of librarians now, as indicated by the ALIA recommendations quoted earlier, where public libraries support all fiction.

Despite these earlier negative views of fiction, there were also librarians arguing on the other side of the debate, which are more like the official positions taken by librarians now. Black et al. (2009) quoted a British librarian who explained:

Personally I would rather the people read a larger percentage of more serious books, but as they demand novels I have attempted to meet their demands. I should never dream of attempting to dictate to other people what they should read. (Hertford Public Library,

101 ‘Believe me, when it comes to providing tripe the public library cannot compete with the commercial, rental library’ (McColvin, 1947, p.73)
Other librarians were likewise accommodating of fiction. Edward Savage, a librarian at Edinburgh Public Libraries, argued, ‘A single book, even a rubbishy book, will start a line of reading, or study, extending over years, if the subject arouses interest in the reader’ (Savage, 1952 in Sturges and Barr, 1992, p.25). However, although public libraries now have a more open and accepting views towards fiction tensions persist when it comes to particular types of fiction. An evaluative hierarchy of different types of books remains.

Whitlam Library has a broad-minded approach to fiction. Librarian A reported the library’s philosophy on fiction:

_We don’t make a distinguishing thing between what’s high literature or whatever. We buy classics, obviously, because libraries need to hold those, and so some of the things we would call high literature are classics so we would buy them, and also the texts students are studying._

Librarian B echoed Edward Savage’s comment from 1952 about a ‘rubbishy’ book having the potential to generate interest and lead to interest in ‘better’ reading materials. He opined:

_So I think we should be offering a bit of that popular piece of junk ... Because otherwise we’re going too far back into 200 years ago ... We’re just there for the masses to learn. ... The person comes into the public library and gets a piece of rubbish out, who’s to say they’re not going to even learn from the rubbish. Well they’ll walk out and hopefully enjoy it, whatever it is, you know, just a joke book or a ... Celebrity biography on some piece of fictional trash star who’s here one minute and gone the next. So let them take it out. Otherwise I think we’re sort of not only denying the public of greater opportunity but we’re setting ourselves up as little bit much as purveyors of excellence, quality, culture. And then you move into that high quality and you need to define all that._

The reluctance of Librarian B to make judgments on what is ‘good’ reading and define quality or culture contrasts with the earliest libraries, reflecting a shift in the librarian’s role from gatekeeper and custodian to a combination of custodian and bookseller. Public libraries have become more responsive to user demands, partly out of necessity, and are now seen less as ‘purveyors of excellence’. Customer service and provision of all types of reading material is prioritised. As such, no overt judgment is made on the reading choices of library users. However,
it is not quite as straightforward as the librarians claim; there is inherent judgment in the language used when particular books are deemed ‘trashy’. Nevertheless, the attempt at universal appeal results in popular fiction comprising a significant proportion of fiction collections in many libraries, though this proportion does vary.

Popular fiction, which is also frequently associated with contemporary genre fiction, emerged in the nineteenth century after the industrial reproduction of texts became available (McCracken, 1998). It is most commonly depicted as the antithesis to literature and literary fiction; literature’s ‘Other’ (Gelder, 2000). Gelder (2004) argues popular fiction is often understood as a ‘culture industry’, a similar assertion to McCracken’s (1998) point that contemporary popular fiction is not simply fiction read by many people, but it is a product of a large entertainment industry. Gelder posits that ‘two key words for understanding popular fiction are ‘industry and entertainment” (2004, p.1), adding that ‘genre’ is another crucial element.

Gelder refers to Literature with a capital L, ‘distinguishing it from literature as a general field of writing’ (Gelder 2004, p.11). Literature is complex and self-critical. By contrast, popular fiction is generic, simple, commercial and concerned with output, deadlines, and sequels (Gelder, 2004). The reader of popular fiction is depicted as passive, uncritical, and only interested in pleasure (Humble, 2012). Gelder observes that:

It is still not uncommon even today for high literary folk to think of readers of popular fiction as tasteless and sensuous (rather than tasteful and intellectual), selecting their writers out of some undefined ‘instinct’ rather than through careful, informed discernment. (Gelder, 2004, p.18)

However, both Humble and Gelder argue that the reader of popular fiction demonstrates a nuanced and active engagement with the text and popular fiction is a legitimate literary field in

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102 Mass market paperback publishing began in Germany in 1932, and accommodated both literary and popular fiction (Gelder, 2008).

103 Interestingly, Worpole reports that because of the relative profitability of popular fiction as compared with more serious literature, many writers write both kinds of fiction, earning a majority of their income through genre fiction which then frees up time to pursue other kinds of writing such as experimental fiction (Worpole, 1984).

104 Genre is one way of classifying cultural products, and conventions and formulae mean that categorising products such as novels can be, on the surface, easy. However, the boundaries that are drawn around genres can be dynamic and fluid (Beer, 2013).
its own right. The friction between popular fiction and Literature is played out in public library collections and the attitudes of both librarians and library users toward these books and their readers. The ratio of popular to literary fiction in library collections, the titles that are promoted in library displays and other marketing materials, and the books that are requested and borrowed by users vary by library. These tensions indicate the demographics and tastes of the users served by the library, and reflect the decisions made by librarians regarding what is best for the library. With limited storage space and book budgets, popular fiction is often stocked at the expense of Literature.

Although popular fiction and Literature have been so far positioned as opposites, there are crossovers and entanglements when literary fiction becomes popular, which is the central thesis of Collins’ book, Bring on the Books for Everybody (2010). Davis suggests that one reason for the decline of literary publishing in Australia is structural, with the industry becoming more consumer-focused and market-driven, placing Literature at a disadvantage: ‘it is one of the less available genres for cross-platform ‘granularisation’, aggregation and transference within vertically integrated global media corporations’ (2007, p.126). His point that literary fiction is not as easily broken up for different media outlets as a cookbook is valid, though the integration of literary fiction and other media forms is precisely Collins’ argument just three years later.

There are several elements to Collins’ argument about the convergence of the popular and the literary: literary fiction has become of mass market consumer culture through popular national librarians and shows such as Oprah’s Book Club, film adaptations, intertextual representations of canonical literature in more popular titles such as the use of Jane Austen’s Pride and Prejudice in Helen Fielding’s Bridget Jones’ Diary, and through the establishment of literature itself as a genre of category fiction. Literary fiction is a category with its own tropes, much like westerns and romances, and moreover it is now accessible to a mass audience.

The convergence of popular and literary and the importance of accessibility relates to a third position on the cultural hierarchy of taste: the middlebrow. In writing about book culture105 in Australia, Carter explains the middlebrow as located at the intersection of ‘a new consumer imperative towards culture and a new organisation of cultural institutions and intermediaries’ (Carter, 2009, p.67). The middlebrow does occupy a position in the field of cultural production

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105 By ‘book culture’, Carter refers to ‘a broad range of institutions, values and practices formed around books, including those of the publishing industry, book selling, book buying, reading and reviewing’ (Carter, 2006, p.331).
between mass entertainment and high culture, but the more relevant point is that culture in the form of ‘good books’ should be made accessible. He suggests that an examination of the middlebrow in print cultures offers an alternative to the high/low binary and shifts the focus onto ordinary reading from literary criticism. Carter observes that there may be a ‘resurgence of a middlebrow book’ (2009, p.80), noting the presence of diverse literatures in bookshops, the boom in literary festivals and prizes, and organised reading events such as book clubs. His observations of this new book culture echo the arguments by Collins (2010) and Fuller and Rehberg Sedo (2013) about new forms of literary culture and mass entertainment, where ‘good’ culture is now made accessible to a wider audience through new entertainment and communication channels.

These discussions about the place of popular fiction, literature and the middlebrow highlight the complexity and interconnections in discussions around reading, taste, and publishing. The public library is a physical as well as imagined site where ordinary reading takes place. It is also where debates around taste hierarchies, legitimate reading, and mass culture are embodied in the books that librarians place on shelves and the books that readers choose to borrow—and, importantly, these discussions and practices are entwined with understandings of library collections as a governmental instrument. To paraphrase Carey, what good are these books? The way Gelder and Collins describe common understandings of popular fiction is remarkably similar to the way librarians of the nineteenth century described fiction as a whole.

There is a distinction of two broadly different categories of fiction—popular and literary—but overt judgment from librarians is withheld. Popular fiction titles grace public library shelves, often in greater numbers than their literary counterparts. Librarian C from Whitlam Library reported higher circulation figures for popular fiction than literary fiction, and noting that would be the same in most public libraries. She observed:

> Actually a lot of our fiction is popular fiction. It’s a big part of it. It is the readership we have here. I mean, an example would be we have the top bestsellers that are according to Dymocks, that’s popular fiction if ever.

It is noteworthy that she mentions Dymocks. Dymocks is a chain of bookshops in Australia, and in 2015 the only major bookshop chain in the country after the closures of Borders and Angus & Robertson. Chain bookshops are typically thought to have more commercial offerings than their independent counterparts (Laties, 2005; Li, 2010; Miller, 2006), and Librarian C’s comment
about stocking books from the Dymocks bestseller list, rather than the independent bookshop bestseller list\textsuperscript{106} indicates the tendency towards popular fiction as opposed to literary fiction. She adds that the library stocks literary fiction as well, but popular fiction is borrowed more.

Librarians therefore believe the library has a role as a place of ideas and knowledge, and as a place where Literature is available. However, they also recognise that metrics and circulation figures are important to the library. The most effective way of ensuring people are borrowing books is to provide the books they want to read, even if the books may not be viewed as intellectual or enlightening. This tension between what some librarians would like people to read and what the public borrows offer revealing insights into the library and its collection as a governmental instrument.

First, an educational or informational role of the library endures, elevating some forms of reading over others. A hierarchy remains, albeit in a more diluted form. Second, it is interesting to observe that one of the reasons libraries need to be concerned with circulation figures and metrics is because of the state. Public libraries in Australia are typically funded through a mix of both state and local governments, with increasing pressure on libraries to justify their funding in recent years. Third, popular fiction itself can be seen as a device for the inculcation of reading.

Light reading can be viewed as a legitimate form of reading, which is greater endorsement for popular fiction than simply stocking books because they are in demand. Librarian I at Narellan Library uses the analogy of nutrition and eating:

\begin{quote}
Life is too short to only be reading Ernest Hemingway. Yes, read all of those, they’re brilliant stuff, but sometimes they’re not what you’re in the mood for. Yes, we should all be eating five veg and two fruit a day and read the labels on the foods; we know we shouldn’t be eating chocolate. But sometimes at the end of the day, what you want is Janet Evanovich and chocolate. And that’s okay.
\end{quote}

Librarian I likened reading Janet Evanovich, a popular crime and romance writer, to eating chocolate, which is like the nineteenth century comparisons of fiction to drink. The difference here is that rather than condemning it for its lack of depth, Librarian I argues for it. There is still clear judgement in that Librarian I considered Evanovich to be less ‘nutritious’ than Hemingway;

\textsuperscript{106} Both independent and chain bookshop bestseller lists are readily available in the major Sydney weekend newspapers and from Nielsen BookScan.
however, she is still supportive of all kinds of reading:

_I think some people are very happy just being stuck in their box. This is what they’re comfortable with; they don’t want something that’s going to terribly tax them. ... I mean, I’m not going to judge them, I read the same stuff sometimes. ... Some people will move on, and I like gateway books for that, but if you don’t go past the gate, well great, you stepped inside. I’m gonna be happy with that._

For Librarian I, reading in itself has value, and if all someone reads is popular fiction, that is better than not reading at all. It is clear that at both Whitlam and Narellan Libraries, popular fiction is important and librarians are largely supportive of this. They believe that having a reading habit is better than not at all, and popular fiction can be the tool that turns non-readers into readers (‘gateway books’). However, there is an interesting contradiction: in their professional role as librarians, they do not judge users’ tastes, but the language used to describe various titles reveals judgement nonetheless.

In contrast to Whitlam and Narellan Libraries, the collection at Lane Cove Library has a greater literary fiction component. The population served is highly educated which has a profound effect on the collection of Lane Cove Library. Librarian J explained:

_We buy literary fiction, because it’s in big demand here. And a lot of our borrowers … they read Spectrum. They read the New York Times Book Review … So we’ve got all those borrowers who are reading these overseas magazines or whatever, who are asking [for] things before they’re out in Australia._

The user demographics at Lane Cove Library contrasts with Whitlam and Narellan Libraries. The local population at Lane Cove is generally highly educated with a high level of household income, as discussed in chapter three. As a result, reading and literature are encouraged and exhibited in slightly different ways. The events, regular activities, and collection at Lane Cove Library are designed to appeal to an engaged community with a high level of literary cultural capital.

Librarian J’s observations of the library’s users paint an image of readers who are actively involved in book culture, where the library is one source for book-related news and events. Respondent Libby, a retired teacher in her 60s, spoke about using the library for research on different places for her various trips, attending travel talks, and participating in the monthly Book Chat discussion group. Laura, a government policy advisor and voracious reader in her late
20s, visits the library multiple times a week. She reported going to author events frequently. For Libby and Laura, the library is a site not only for books and browsing, but also a place that provides opportunities to engage with books in a more social and interactive way.

Furthermore, some users at Lane Cove will explicitly reject popular fiction, as Librarian K observed:

*I do have borrowers that won’t even entertain, you know they will come up and say, I have read this particular book and I want, you know, something that matches it, but they, if you ever remotely go near a popular fiction author, oh my goodness they will tell you.*

This comment highlights an element of elitism, demonstrating Gelder’s point that:

The very act of reading popular fiction involves and provokes evaluation, as those of us who have sat on a train or in an airport with a fantasy novel or a romance novel in our hands – conscious, perhaps, of being assessed and judged by other commuters as they move around us – will know only too well. (Gelder, 2004, p.5)

A library’s collection reflects the community it serves, and libraries can also be sites for the ‘production, dissemination and appropriation of cultural capital’ (Goulding, 2008, p.236). This role is entwined with content of their collections.

5.4.3 Cataloguing and shelving of romance

I have so far deliberately ignored one highly read but frequently neglected genre, and it is to this genre, romance, that I now turn. These issues around culture and popular fiction in the library are not free of power and regulation, though they operate at a different level to the dispositif. The dispositif is a way of understanding the library at a general level, while the issue of culture and hierarchies within the library comprise just one component of the dispositif. Notions of power and regulation within these discussions of popular fiction and culture are most obvious in the stocking, shelving, and cataloguing of romance.
Romance is a widely-read and popular genre. Romance fiction sales in Australia increased from $18 million in 2011 to $52 million in 2012107 (Bochenski, 2013). In the US, the romance genre generated $1.44 billion in sales in 2012 and an estimated $1.40 billion in 2013 (Publishing Perspectives, n.d.). Despite its popularity, romance and its sister genre chick-lit are often subject to derisive remarks and dismissal by literary commentators. Criticism of the genre is not new; Worpole commented in 1984 that romance fiction has been criticised for encouraging wishful thinking, reinforcing and legitimising gender roles, and for being over-conventionalised (Worpole, 1984). Flesch (2004) makes similar observations, noting that throughout the 1970s and 1980s, romance readers were often regarded as youthful or infantile, reading uncritically and simply accepting the norms of the genre, where the male is portrayed to be domineering and the woman submissive.

Similar criticisms exist in contemporary assessments, with publications as varied as The Economist (Economist, 2012), The Guardian (Connell, 2010; Gorman, 2010; Holmes, 2014; Trollope, 2008), Salon (D’Addario, 2013), the Huffington Post (Fallon, 2013), and ABC’s The Drum (Bennett, 2014; Mayo, 2014) publishing opinion pieces on romance and chick-lit. These pieces highlight a generally negative attitude, dismissing the genres as frivolous, unfeminist, and primarily about shopping, men and handbags. However, there is also a defence of the genre in this chorus of criticism. Worpole observes that historically, ‘The popular romance novel written by women was possibly the only cultural space where women could be considered as thinkers, and as people having opinions, areas denied them by all other social and cultural forms and institutions’ (Worpole, 1984, p.39).

In the contemporary media pieces mentioned above, some defend the genre and draw attention to the variety of quality and depth available. Notably, Beyond Heaving Bosoms by Sarah Wendell and Candy Tan (2009) is a book that came out of the website ‘Smart Bitches Trashy Books’ which began in 2005 (Smart Bitches Trashy Books, 2015). The book and website largely defends the genre of romance, highlighting the diversity in the genre and the complex and nuanced plots that can be found in romance novels. The book and website is a defence for both

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107 Accurate figures are difficult to obtain, as they are not publicly available. The sales figures I mention here are from an article in the Sydney Morning Herald, but do not explain the significant increase from $18 million to $52 million. The Romance Writers of Australia, an organisation that promotes romance writing in Australia and supports romance authors, only reports statistics from the UK and US (Romance Writers of Australia, 2014). Nielsen BookScan, a sales and data monitoring company, likely tracks the figures but their data is not publicly accessible.
the genre and its readers. Their work echoes earlier research, Radway’s *Reading the Romance* (1984), which examined the reading practices of romance readers in a Midwestern American city. She argues that romance reading is simply one element of their leisure activities, and recounts a bookseller’s advice to her romance reading customers:

Dot encourages her customers to feel proud of their regular reading and provides them with an indignant response that they can draw upon when challenged by men who claim superior taste. By questioning them rhetorically about whether their romance reading is any different from their husbands’ endless attention to televised sports, she demonstrates an effective rejoinder that can be used in the battle to defend the leisure pursuit they enjoy so much but which the larger culture condemns as frivolous and vaguely, if not explicitly, pornographic. (Radway, 1984, p.54)

The work of Wendell and Tan and Radway reveal that a move beyond evaluative hierarchies of reading makes new forms of action possible. It allows for new reader identities and complicates earlier assumptions; enabling types of reading that were once considered simple, generic and lesser to be seen through a different lens. Readers of romance, popular fiction and genre fiction likewise ought not to be seen as inferior to readers of literary fiction, but instead as readers whose tastes are no less legitimate.

One role of the library is to not simply move past evaluative hierarchies and accept a place for popular fiction within library collections, but provide a space where new forms of identities as readers can be enacted. However, despite these defences and more nuanced understandings of the genre, a generally negative or critical view of romance pervades, even amongst librarians who profess to approve of all kinds of reading—as seen in the cataloguing and shelving of romance novels in some public libraries.

At Narellan Library, romance and chick-lit are separated out as two distinct genres. This is clear in their shelving and genre stickers, as seen in Figures 5.10 and 5.11 and, importantly, in the way they are catalogued. The books are catalogued clearly, as seen in Figures 5.7 to 5.9. Figures 5.7 to 5.9 display the results of three catalogue searches. Figure 5.7 shows the results of a general ‘Mills and Boon’ search, which reveal details about author and title. Similarly, Figure 5.8 shows search results for a well-known Mills and Boon author, Marion Lennox. The detailed results clearly show the author and title, as well as the books being in the romance collection and are part of the Mills and Boon series—including even which subgenre within Mill and Boon such
as ‘medical’ Mills and Boon’ or ‘sweet romance’ Mills and Boon. Figure 5.9 depicts the results of a search for ‘Sophie Kinsella’, author of many titles categorised as chick-lit. The catalogue entry indicates that her books are shelved in the chick-lit collection, as distinct from romance. It is clear that at Narellan Library, and in the Camden Library Service of which Narellan is a part, romance and chick-lit are treated as two distinct genres, that are worthy of cataloguing like all other genres, unlike the other two case study libraries.

![Figure 5.7 Search results for a Camden Library catalogue search for general Mills and Boon titles](image_url)
Figure 5.8 Catalogue entry on the Camden Library search for Marion Lennox, a well-known Mills and Boon author

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<th>Collection</th>
<th>Call Number</th>
<th>Status/Desc</th>
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<td>Narellan</td>
<td>Fiction</td>
<td>F LEN</td>
<td>Available</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Romance</td>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Narellan</td>
<td>Fiction</td>
<td>F LEN</td>
<td>Onloan - Due: 13 May 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Romance</td>
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A striking contrast is the lack of cataloguing at the Fairfield Library Service. Catherine is a librarian from Whitlam Library who was interviewed as a reader and library user. She revealed that Fairfield only began cataloguing some of their Mills and Boon books in 2013. Previously they had a barcode which would show up as a ‘Mills and Boon’ book, but were not differentiated by title or author. This was partly because they were considered ephemera, since they were not books purchased by the library, as Catherine explained:
Because we don’t buy our Mills and Boon, we just rely on donations... So there’s no value to them because we haven’t had to pay for them. I think if we bought them, it would be slightly different. But because we don’t, they’re almost seen as just ephemera.

She elaborated on the cataloguing, saying:

Mills and Boon [get] one record, called Mills and Boon, and all the books get added, with their own barcode, but they don’t get differentiated in any way. ... We treat them like they’re a Mills and Boon book. So if you want to find a specific author, you can’t. If you want to find a specific title, you can’t.

A result of this method of cataloguing was that the most popular title borrowed was always Mills and Boon, despite there being approximately 600 individual titles. Each of the titles may have only been borrowed once, but because they were all under the same catalogue entry, they appeared more popular than they may have actually been. Catherine recalled that the library manager, upon seeing Mills and Boon as the most popular title, wanted that changed because she did not see value in the books. The solution would have been to catalogue them with titles and authors, but Catherine also observed, ‘The reason they don’t do it [cataloguing] is because they don’t see value in it’ and ‘You’ll find a lot of librarians either won’t read it or they won’t admit to reading it, because they’re not ‘real’ books’.

In fairness, the lack of cataloguing of Mills and Boon novels is not always an issue of power and regulation or the librarian’s perceived lack of value in the books. At Parkes Public Library in regional NSW, Mills and Boon novels do not have a library barcode, and instead when those books are borrowed, a ‘Mills and Boon’ barcode kept at the circulation desk is used. A librarian explained that the volume of Mills and Boon books released each month made it too inefficient in terms of processing times to properly catalogue each title.

The cataloguing (or lack thereof) of romance titles reflects issues of access and the library as a site of cultural capital (see chapter seven), and highlights the way classification can hold exclusionary power (Snyder, 1984). Veros (2015) argues that the marginalisation of romance

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108 The voraciousness of romance readers is further highlighted by the example of Scribd, an online book subscription service, limiting its romance and erotica offerings because they were not making a sufficient amount from the subscription fees for the royalties paid to authors and still expand the overall size and range of the service (Barnett, 2015).
fiction suggests the genre is not thought to possess cultural capital despite possessing economic capital, and the absence of correct cataloguing of romance contributes to the lack of cultural capital. Furthermore, this can remove economic capital from authors by affecting what they may receive through Public Lending Rights. If the book is not catalogued properly, the book is more difficult for readers to find and, importantly, detached from its creator.

Issues of power and access have a spatial manifestation in their shelving arrangements. At Narellan Library, romance and chick-lit are separated out as two distinct genres. This is clear in their shelving and genre stickers, as seen in Figures 5.10 and 5.11. Figure 5.10 depicts the Mills and Boon collection (including hardcover titles as well as the less durable paperbacks), with the distinctly visible red heart sticker to indicate romance, taking up a prominent space in the shelves. Figure 5.11 shows the chick-lit collection, shelved amongst the main adult fiction section, clearly signposted and with a pink stiletto sticker.
By contrast, romance novels at Whitlam Library do not have the same prominence. They are placed on their own smaller shelves, known as rotundas or paperback spinners, separate from the rest of the collection and less visible, as seen in Figure 5.12.
The different ways libraries treat romance in terms of purchasing, cataloguing and shelving highlight various attitudes librarians hold towards the genre, akin to a physical embodiment of the debates played out in newspaper and online opinion columns regarding the value of romance and chick-lit. This example of romance and chick-lit embodies certain attitudes towards popular fiction in general, with its associated implications in relation to legitimacy, elitism and cultural capital. This raises broader questions about the library as an instrument that—through its collections—orders people: who is doing the management and selection, what
judgments are being passed about various books, authors and genres, with what implications for library collections and reader choices? Many Australian public libraries in 2015 are positioned as places of lifelong learning that meet the community’s educational and recreational needs. This broad appeal would not be entirely accurate if a genre as popular as romance is not adequately stocked or catalogued, or if it were treated differently from all other fiction genres, as it is in some public libraries.

**Conclusion**

In 2013, there was a reorganisation of the collection at Whitlam Library and books were separated into genre and subject categories. Circulation figures had been dropping and this was a way of re-energising the collection and encouraging new ways to browse. The questions posed at the beginning of the chapter are brought back into focus: what is the role of books in the library?

A library’s collection is still a significant component of the resources offered, and indeed might be considered a fundamental part of a library’s identity. Importantly, as the material form of the book changes and reader demands shift towards e-books and digital sources of information, library collections have changed in response: a library collection is more than just a physical book comprised of paper and ink. This chapter examined three key forces or influences shaping collections: governmental, technical and commercial.

First, the collection is an important device in the library as a dispositif. Historically, the collection was an instrument used for civilising purposes, a tool for the citizenry’s self-education (Bivens-Tatum 2012; Black et al., 2009; Hornsey 2010). In the contemporary context, the reforming nature of the collection is no longer as overt and books are not spoken about as sobering or civilising devices that lead citizen-readers to a path of cultural enlightenment. The core collection (both the concept and existence of a core collection) is perhaps the clearest device in positioning the library as a site for knowledge and education, and producing informed citizens, distinguishing the library from the bookshop and underscoring its governmental role. Its governing task is also seen in the LOTE collection, in its support for digital literacy, and even in the provision of popular fiction and romance—if only for the view that it is more important to be reading than not reading at all.

The practical, material processes that are part of collection development form the second important element of collection development examined. There are processes, policies and documents that enable books to arrive on library shelves and able to be borrowed. Importantly,
librarians are not the only actors with influence over which titles end up in library collections. Commercial library suppliers are important actors in this process. The position of the library at the intersection of commercial and public spheres is not solely due to libraries adopting more retail-influenced ways of display and arrangement—there are also private enterprises that have an important effect on collection development. The collection can be understood as a governing tool, but the question of who is doing the governing is more complex.

Commercial forces play a significant role in not only what is published, but what is promoted and what readers demand to borrow from libraries. These forces are the third influence on library collections examined in this chapter. As mentioned, library suppliers are key commercial organisations that influence collection development, and certainly trends from bookshops and retailing have affected book organisation and display in libraries. But the commercial influence is even broader. In the contemporary book industry, authors are often involved in their own promotion through social media and events, book trailers are now seen for highly-anticipated books, best-selling novels are often turned into films or multimedia franchises, and best-selling authors can achieve celebrity status (Collins, 2010). These practices affect how readers learn about new books and the books they expect to borrow from the library.

These three strands of influence—governmental, technical and commercial—are brought together in library collections. The time during which this research was conducted is an important transition moment for public libraries, with many shifting their focus attention being a collection-centric library to one that focuses on the library user. The collection is still a significant component that makes a library a ‘library’, but the spotlight has moved. In the following chapter, I turn to new focus: the making of the library as a community space.
Chapter 6
Developing community through libraries

Introduction

The local dimensions of liberal community were most apparent in the municipal library. This was to be a library in the centre of the town. Hence the use, to this day, of the term ‘Central Library’. This central library was the showplace of the other libraries of the town or city. … They were to be separate and specially designed buildings … designed to exemplify civic identity and proper civic behaviour. (Joyce, 2003, p.135)

In his work on the liberal governance of the nineteenth-century state, Joyce argues that the local governing authority played a key role in the ‘minute governmental regulation of everyday life’ (2003, p.104) and the local library exemplified how this role was realised in the ordinary life of the city’s citizens. Developing a liberal, self-governing community that existed in close relation with the free individual was a strategy by which liberal governmentality could ‘rule at a distance’.

The library was a clear example where liberal communities were made and individuals could become self-regulating and connected with their communities: it was public, open, transparent, and represented ‘the identity of the local community’ through its collections and geographical location (Joyce, 2003, p.130). Furthermore, the branches represented the local within the local: ‘after the opening of the central libraries of the time, branch and sub-branch libraries opened too, each held to represent the spirit of communities within the city’ (Joyce, 2003, p.137).

Importantly, the state is not the only actor involved in the practice of governmentality and governing through community. Rose observes that there is an ‘intrinsic heterogeneity, contestability and mobility in practices for the government of conduct’ and there are multiple actors and groups that are also seeking to act on conduct to achieve certain ends (Rose 2000a, p.323). He lists doctors, lawyers, churches, community organisations and pressure groups as examples of such actors. Other aspects of city life have also been enmeshed in the exercise of governmentality and control such as schooling, public architecture and leisure facilities. I suggest that libraries may be added to the list of actors and technologies involved in the practice of governing. Furthermore, libraries are both an arm of the state as well as being somewhat
independent of the state—as I discussed in chapter three, the public library in Australia is part of local council, but in many cases, the councils delegate responsibility of the everyday practices and routines to the professional librarians. This places the library in a unique position as an arm of the (local) government but one that is also operated on by other forces (as examined in chapter one).

In this chapter, I take Rose and Joyce’s ideas of governing through community and examine how they might be applied to the public library in the contemporary Australian context. The concepts shed light on how local council authorities in Australia have used the notion of community to promote particular ideals and behaviours. The council provision of spaces such as leisure centres, parks, art galleries as well as regulatory services such as environmental management and planning contribute to various aspects of community. The public library sits alongside these council spaces and services and is a particularly visible strategy through which councils achieve their community goals and interact with their constituencies.

I also suggest that professional literatures offer new ways of understanding how library conduct—through community—is being shaped. This chapter brings together these two theoretical threads. In council documents and professional literatures, libraries are often referred to as ‘community spaces’ or ‘community hubs’ and their importance as open, accessible public spaces is stressed. The way councils and libraries use the term ‘community’ is understood as a device within broader council strategies for governing the population and one element of the library as a dispositif. Additionally, the literatures on social capital and encounter are significant. They have a profound impact on the way libraries are constructed, marketed and justified to funding bodies; the way these newer ideas of community are used in professional discourse is part of the library dispositif. In this chapter, the dispositif is approached slightly differently and two different but overlapping dispositifs are at play. Here, the notion of ‘community’ is also understood as a dispositif of which the library is one part, used by the council as a method of local governance.

I begin the chapter with a review of key literatures that connects governmentality with community, particularly that of Rose and Joyce, and then link this to how the term community has been used in the context of the post-World War II Australian municipal library. I review scholarly literatures that have received attention in more recent discussions on libraries as community spaces, such as social capital and encounter. The connection between governmentality and community is then further illustrated by drawing on Mattern (2014a) and Fincher and Iveson (2008) to understand how libraries and communities are part of governing
strategies. My attention then focuses on the case study libraries and I consider the way ‘community’ is realised across the three case study libraries and their respective councils. In the final section, I examine how social capital and community have been used as devices and disseminated in professional librarian literature and how these concepts, as components within the library as a dispositif, are encouraged or enacted in various library spaces.

6.1 Governing through community

In a brief history of the term ‘community’, Rose (1999) suggests that liberal political discourse has traditionally been concerned with the link between individual freedoms and the interests of the community. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the shift in language from ‘community’ to ‘society’ related to the way social bonds were created and used. In post-World War II Britain, ‘community’ meant the traditional working-class urban neighbourhood and its breakdown, and the 1960s and 1970s saw the establishment of a community of welfare reformers that consisted of a network of professional institutions. Following this, the usage of ‘community’ in the third sector refers to emotional ties—the way individual identities are constructed through relationships, local histories and values (Rose, 1999).

Rose’s conceptualisation of ‘governing through community’ refers to a shift in the management and governance of the population in the 1960s in Britain, where the language of ‘community’ became part of a professional discourse, and communities became ‘zones to be investigated, mapped, classified, documented, interpreted’ (Rose, 1996a, p.332). Community itself became a sector ‘whose vectors and forces can be mobilized, enrolled, deployed in novel programmes and techniques which encourage active practices of self-management and identity construction, of personal ethics and collective allegiances’ (Rose, 1999, p.176; see also Rose, 1996a). Furthermore, community is ‘not simply the territory in which crime is to be controlled, it is itself a means of government’ (Rose, 2000a, p.329). Community is theorised as a technology to control a population.

Similarly, Joyce, drawing on Rose’s Powers of Freedom (1999), envisages a method of governmentality where the population is ruled through freedom: ‘freedom as something to be ruled through, freedom as a formula for exercising power, and freedom, as has been said, as a technique of rule, as technological’ (2003, p.1, emphasis in original). He suggests that in liberal governmentality in the nineteenth century, there was an emphasis on the liberal community; the individual and the community existed in relation to each other: ‘free communities and free
individuals were mutually constitutive in liberalism, the sanctions of community guarding against the excesses of the individual, and vice versa’ (Joyce, 2003, p.100). For Joyce, community was closely linked to liberal governmentality; the governing of the free individual was only achievable with the existence of the liberal community. Furthermore, this model of rule was rendered possible through various technologies, of which the library was one. The library was ‘a sort of technology of liberal publicity, something dedicated to the transmission and the absolute transparency of knowledge, just as notions of liberal community were concerned to develop transparency of institutions and practices of the city at large’ (Joyce, 2003, p.15).

In Rose’s conceptualisation of governing through community in the 1960s in Britain, individuals are envisaged as citizens of ‘neighbourhoods, associations, regions, networks, subcultures, age groups, ethnicities, and lifestyle sectors—in short, communities’ (Rose, 2000b, p.1398). In these communities, individuals would learn how to enact their freedom as members of communities. Importantly, political strategies sought to use the virtuous consequences of these bonds, such as co-operation, ‘belongingness’ and identity, to govern free subjects. Governmental practices aimed to connect individuals through the mechanism of community so that they became not just individuals but communalised individuals.

In addition, technologies were developed to make communities real and governable (Rose, 1999). These include devices such as attitudinal surveys and opinion polls, which transformed ‘community’ into something quantifiable and mappable. Community experts were developed: ‘These experts are now on hand to advise on how communities and citizens might be governed in terms of their values, and how their values shape the ways they govern themselves’ (Rose, 1999, p.189). In short, ‘community’ became a tool that taught individuals how to be self-governing, active citizens as well as a device that could be used by authorities and experts to govern.

Related to this idea of the communalised individual is the active citizen. Marinetto (2003) draws on Foucault and Rose’s ideas about governance and community to explore the notion of the active citizen in Britain in the 1990s. He suggests that although this approach disperses power throughout society and emphasises the role of the self-reliant and self-regulating individual, various levels of the state still play a significant role in promoting active citizenship through policy interventions; political power has not been completely transferred.

These ideas of governmentality and the individual are brought together in Rose’s essay on government and control (Rose, 2000a). Rose reviews recent analyses of governmentality and observes that various examinations of the term have characterised individuals as ‘members of a
flock to be shepherded, as children to be nurtured and tutored, as citizens with rights, as rational calculating individuals whose preferences to be acted upon’ (Rose, 2000a, p.323). Furthermore, spaces for government have been mapped out, and the technologies of government linked together, all to form coherent strategies for the conduct of conduct (ibid.).

Contemporary control strategies for the conduct of conduct can be divided into two groups. First, there are circuits of inclusion, where individuals are controlled by the networks and transactions of their everyday lives. Examples Rose provides of these strategies of inclusion are inclusive identities, where individuals are required to have proof of legitimate identity and thus linking ‘identification, individuation and control’ (ibid.) and individuals and communities becoming ‘partners in prudence’—the state is no longer wholly responsible for security and control, and communities and individuals have also become partially responsible for their own safety. Second, there are circuits of exclusion, where ‘anti-citizens and marginal spaces’ are managed (Rose, 2000a, p.330). Control and government in this circuit is more concerned with managing risk, preventing crime, and containing those deemed to be dangerous. The difference between the two is most clearly articulated in Rose’s description of the individuals in each circuit:

A majority who can and do ensure their own well-being and security through their own active self-promotion and responsibility for themselves and their families, and those who are outside this nexus of activity: the underclass, the marginalized, the truly disadvantaged, the criminals. (Rose, 2000a, p.331)

These two categories of control strategies divide the population into two groups: active, engaged, responsible citizens who are capable of self-governing and liberal rule, and those who are on the margins and outside of this self-regulating community. Council discourse appeals to the first group, of the responsible, engaged individual, but interestingly it is the library that welcomes the second group, a point I return to in section 6.3. Now, my attention turns to the way community became a governing strategy in twentieth century Australia and the role played by libraries.

6.2 Building community through libraries in the post-war era

The notion of the public library as a community space dates back to the period following World War II both in Australia and overseas, and it was part of a wider state program to create active, self-governing citizens (Hayes and Morris, 2005; Lewi and Nichols, 2010). During the 1950s and
1960s, an era of post-war reconstruction, Australian municipal libraries were often built as ‘civic buildings of monumental aspiration’ (Goad and Nichols, 2010, p.93). These civic buildings were part of a wider program to ‘signal notions of citizenship found through community, education and access rather than the vagaries of municipal authority’ (ibid.) They were heralded as educational facilities that—alongside other municipal institutions such as swimming pools, community centres, bowling clubs, and childcare centres—would contribute to the building of community in twentieth century Australia (Lewi and Nichols, 2010).

These developments occurred partly because of the relatively high levels of economic growth in Australia, the US and other developed countries that followed World War II. This growth led to higher incomes, metropolitan expansion, suburbanisation, and the emergence of ‘leisure time’ (O’Callaghan and Hogben, 2014; see also Goad, 2014). In Britain, this was the period when the modern welfare state developed (Black and Pepper, 2012). In Australia, government provision of welfare programs in the era of post-war reconstruction was strongly focused on community building during this time:

The progressive planning that underpinned the substantive programme of post-war suburban growth and regional development in Australia was focused firmly on the idea of community values and the state provision of purpose-built facilities for recreational, educational and health needs. … State support for community life was tied closely to broader political objectives for the creation of a welfare state, and policy priorities emphasising rapid population increase in the interests of national security, workforce stability and economic growth. (Nichols et al., 2010, p.588)

Lewi and Nichols (2010) explore the connection between the governmental push for community and the built landscape in Australia. Governmental priorities in the twentieth century focused on health, education and community, and the realisation of these goals ‘often required new types of public services, many of which had emerged initially as the results of social activism, religious patronage or philanthropy, and then quickly became mainstays of municipal provision’ (Lewi et al. 2010, p.3). These facilities included kindergartens, baby health centres, community centres, and public libraries.

As discussed in chapter one, the development of municipal libraries in Australia did not gain traction until the decades following WWII and in particular after the publication of the Munn-Pitt Report (1935) and the McColvin Report (1947). Prior to this, the provision of
libraries across the country was inconsistent—they were largely provided as part of Mechanics’ Institutes and Schools of Art—with each state having its own reference library. Beginning in the late 1940s and 1950s, municipal libraries grew in number as post-war reconstruction efforts encouraged population growth in regional centres, and suburbanisation began to take hold (Goad and Nichols, 2010).

Libraries were designed as civic monuments, anchors for a community precinct that would play a role in forming the mind of citizens. Modernist architecture was particularly influential in building design between the 1920s and 1970s, a style that prioritised functional facilities that complemented the landscape. Modernist architecture came to dominate the built environment in Europe, North America and Australia, where its design principles were entwined with ideas of social progress (Lewi et al., 2010). Lewi et al. suggest that modernism was ‘instrumental in shaping the physical and social health of populations in the 20th century through … the provision of a modern healthy environment that could productively influence the future of the individual, the child and the family’ (2010, p.12).

As part of this, there was a move towards the creation of civic precincts including town halls, post offices, and libraries. The importance of these spaces for community is highlighted by the architect brief for the design of three suburban libraries in Brisbane in 1955, as Goad and Nichols report: ‘Part of Birrell’s brief was that the library had to be a room where people could meet and congregate’ (2010, p.94). The library building itself had to be amenable to social and casual encounters but more importantly, the location of the library mattered. In describing one of Birrell’s libraries, Goad and Nichols write:

Its proximity to a public shopping street, police station, school and public park, and its public landscape designed for children made Birrell’s Annerley Library a modernist civic precinct in miniature. (Goad and Nichols, 2010, p.96)

A governing element to this community role is evident. Goad and Nichols report that SR Jones from the Annerley Junction Traders’ Association remarked, ‘The library is corrective action for children who might otherwise go astray’ (Goad and Nichols, 2010, p.95). This is consistent with the belief that good citizens could be made through community, education and access.

Hayes and Morris (2005) report this kind of governmental role in their historical overview of the library’s leisure role in the UK:
A major objective for the establishment of public libraries was the part they could play in the reform of working-class leisure. Public libraries, it was thought, would be a force against crime by maintaining social order and promoting moral values through the provision of better leisure opportunities. (Hayes and Morris, 2005, p.80)

The creation of the library as a community space is therefore not a new phenomenon. The library as a device for community building and promoting social order has been around since the mid-twentieth century as the urban landscape and state goals around community shifted after World War II. A combination of growing leisure time and suburbanisation resulted in the expansion of the branch library and, crucially, the positioning of the library as an important civic space.

6.3 Contemporary understandings of ‘community’ in the library profession

The term ‘community’ features strongly in contemporary discourse about libraries, and libraries continue to be perceived as part of broader council strategies to promote community, what I refer to as ‘community dispositifs’, as I discuss later in this chapter. However, there has been a shift in focus from the suburban, modernist, Anglo-Australian understandings of ‘community’ that prevailed in post-war Australia to an inflection of community that incorporates culturally and linguistically diverse populations, social capital, and the importance of encounters and interactions between strangers. Some of these concepts associated with the newer uses of the concept of ‘community’ emerge from different theoretical traditions that do not always mesh seamlessly. In this section, I analyse the way community and related ideas such as social capital have been used in the professional literature, and suggest that there are other ways of understanding community in the contemporary public library. This section aims to move the discussion on libraries as community spaces from the post-war era focus on civickness and nation-building to the present-day emphasis on libraries as community spaces that foster social cohesion and social interactions.

Libraries are often said to serve the local community or build community, and this is seen both in professional literature and the interviews conducted with librarians and library users. A recently published book, Transforming Libraries, Building Communities: The Community-Centered Library (Edwards et al., 2013) highlights this trend in the professional industry. In the library context,
‘public’ refers to a broad group of people, such as when librarians refer to the library being open to the public—open to everyone, without discrimination. ‘Community’ refers to a smaller group, a subset of the public, and typically the group of people who live in the catchment area of the library and who use or could use the library’s services. For example, Bourke argues that ‘public libraries have always had a community building approach’ (2013, p.28) and what is important for libraries is ‘to know what a particular community needs and respond appropriately’ (ibid.). Bourke is a senior librarian at the Fairfield City Library Service, and her article ‘Community building at Fairfield City Library Service’ was published in *INCITE* Magazine, a magazine published by ALIA for the library and information sector in Australia (as mentioned in chapter one). Her article indicates that ‘community’ is not one homogeneous group, but rather there are specificities to communities.

An important observation can be made here that highlights the complexity of the library’s identity. As I noted earlier, Rose argues that contemporary control strategies can be divided into two groups, broadly identified as strategies of inclusion or exclusion. In the circuits of inclusion, individuals are controlled by the networks and transactions of their everyday lives—‘control is not centralized but dispersed, it flows through a network of open circuits that are rhizomatic and not hierarchical’ (Rose, 2000a, p.325). In the circuits of exclusion, ‘anti-citizens and marginal spaces’ are managed (Rose, 2000a, p.330).

The public library is a space where these two circuits come together. As I have discussed throughout this thesis, the library has been imagined as an everyday space where individuals are provided opportunities for self-improvement and responsibility for their own learning and engagement with their community. This is closely linked to Rose’s circuits of inclusions, where individuals are identified as residents or workers in an LGA, and as library members. But the library also operates as a space for the excluded, where marginalised individuals are actively sought. Bourke’s article on community building recounted a program at the library, ‘Finding My Place’, which supported at-risk teenagers. In this program, students from local high schools who were truanting or identified as at risk of dropping out of school attended workshops with motivational trainers and speakers. Librarian A, a senior librarian at Whitlam Library, spoke in detail about the program:

*That program is for students who are disengaged from school. … So they’re kids who are truanting and disengaging and whatever that they see if they had a little positive input might turn them around. … We bring them here to Cabramatta [library] … It’s a sort of motivational program, so we have people who*
come and engage with the kids. We have a local guy, Tony Huang … He was a drug addict and a drug dealer; he belonged to the 5T gang and ended up in prison. Had a total life transformation, I guess is the only way you could say it, and now he works with young people and so he comes and talks to the kids about drugs and crime that unfortunately some of them are heading to, or some of them are already involved in and I guess it takes a bit of the glamour away and shows what the reality of that kind of life actually looks like. ... Two girls from the previous group [came] and [talked] to the current group about how when they started they thought it was just a way of getting out of school and how it actually changed their lives and it really changed how they approached what they were doing and what they thought about their future and whatever. It was actually quite powerful to hear these girls talk about it.

These are students who perhaps are already excluded or marginalised within the school community, with a potential for exclusion from society more generally as they leave school, and the public library—through its ideas around the role of the library in community building—attempts to transform them into engaged citizens. In the contemporary library context, Rose’s ideas of control and governing are not as clear cut, and other approaches to conduct and control are perhaps more relevant and useful.

Bourke’s article and its publication in a professional magazine reveals how the language of community has entered professional discourse and become a governing device, where ‘building community’ is one method of governing. This use of community as a method of serving (and thereby governing) different subsets of the population recalls Rose’s (1996a) observation that ‘community’ in the UK during the 1960s became part of a new political language and communities evolved into distinct zones to be ‘mapped, classified, documented, interpreted’ (Rose, 1996a, p.332). The programs aimed at building community such as ‘Finding My Place’ are governmental technologies to develop citizens who are self-regulating (motivated students with goals and achievements as opposed to truants or high school drop-outs).

The community building approach discussed by Bourke has been prevalent in the library profession both in Australia and overseas since the early 2000s. Hillenbrand observes that in Australia, community building emerged in the 2000s as a theme of government policy, and she notes that ‘voices have begun to emerge from within the library profession claiming a place for the public library in this endeavour’ (2005, p.7). The idea of libraries as community builders gained traction from 1999, when the president of the American Library Association adopted the theme ‘libraries build communities’ (Hillenbrand, 2005), and the community-building aspect of libraries continues to this day (Oliphant, 2014). More recently, O’Hehir and Reynolds (2015)
reviewed reports produced by the State Libraries of New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland and ALIA that offer visions for the public library of the future. They found that the two most common themes emerging from those reports were community and creativity.

The terms used to refer to library users are important in the library’s community building role (Pundsack, 2015). Pundsack’s essay on library user terminology is published in *Public Libraries Online*, the companion website to *Public Libraries*, a professional magazine published by the American Library Association. The last time the profession debated what term was best for describing library visitors was in 2004—this is not a new debate, nor is it one that has been conclusively resolved. It is appropriate to revisit the discussion as library services have transformed in the past decade and now have a stronger community focus. Pundsack states, ‘the terminology we use can help us to establish an identifiable brand within our communities’ (2015, para.4). She suggests that each term used to describe library visitors indicates a different conception of library users and consequently how they are treated. ‘Patron’ indicates the library prioritises serving the public and clearly signals its position as a public service. By contrast, ‘customer’ places the library within the commercial or business sphere and thus shifts the library into an arena where success is measured by profit and metrics—not quite aligning with the idea of the library as serving the public. Similarly, Molaro (2012) argues that the chosen term reflects a philosophical worldview and reveals the relationship between the institution and the user.

The librarians I interviewed during this research generally referred to library users as ‘customers’ or ‘users’, indicating the influence of commercial language on the library world. This is somewhat inconsistent with the image of the library as a community space and public institution grounded in civic culture. This does, however, highlight the complexity involved in understanding the public library as a site where civic and commercial forces meet, where ‘community’ is comprised of strangers, acquaintances, and friends.

There is one further way of thinking about library users which relates back to Marinetto’s point about the active citizen, and this is to understand the library user as a community activist. The library as a community space is not politically neutral but rather it can be a site of collective and contested presence. The construction and design of the library is not a clear top-down function of the state, and the users can play an important role in influencing library outcomes and futures. This notion of the library user as a political agent is most obvious in the issue of public library funding, where campaigns to keep libraries open and funded have occurred in recent years both overseas and in Australia.
Budget cuts to the local councils and public libraries has been an ongoing issue in the UK since the federal election in 2010. Since that time, numerous campaigns and user groups have been started, protesting library closures and advocating for public libraries. These campaigns and groups are grassroots movements, led by citizens and library users across the country. *The Library Campaign* is a volunteer-run registered charity that brings together ‘friends of library’ groups and library users to disseminate information and represent library users in consultations with national bodies responsible for library provision (*The Library Campaign*, 2016).

Professional bodies in Australia have begun similar campaigns. In 2014, the NSW Public Libraries Association (NSWPLA) began to lobby for more funding for public libraries from the State Government. When the Library Act was first adopted by municipalities in NSW, The State Government contributed 50 per cent of the funding. By 1979, State Government support comprised 30 per cent of funding, and by 1992, that figure had dropped to 11.5 per cent (Biskup, 1995). The State Government in 2014 contributed 7 per cent of library funding, with the remaining 93 per cent provided by local councils (NSWPLA, 2014). Furthermore, the current state funding model is not indexed to inflation or population growth. The NSWPLA proposed a funding model that increased state library funding to councils from $26.5 million per annum to $30 million per annum from 2013/14 and indexed from the following year (NSWPLA, 2014). This campaign received widespread media coverage and attracted 70,000 signatures on its petition, as well as community support: letters and stories from library users that were collected under the title ‘Libraries Making a Difference’.

To examine the idea of the library as a community space frequently seen in professional discourse, I introduce two important frames for understanding libraries. First, libraries are often perceived as sites for the generation of social capital, which are ‘connections among individuals—social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them’ (Putnam, 2000, p.19). Putnam makes the distinction between bridging capital, which refers to connections between people from different backgrounds (such as class, age and race) and bonding capital, which refers to connections between people from similar backgrounds.109

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109 Another interpretation of social capital is worth mentioning here, though this understanding is not as prevalent in LIS literature. Bourdieu defines the concept as ‘the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition’ (Bourdieu, 1985, p.248, in Portes, 1998, p.3). That is, social relations allow individuals to ‘access
Second, libraries are seen as ‘third places’, which Oldenburg characterises as ‘a generic designation for a great variety of public places that hosts the regular, voluntary, informal, and happily anticipated gatherings of individuals beyond the realms of home and work’ (1989, p.16). ‘Third places’ are related to Putnam’s interpretation of social capital, and can be considered as the places where social capital may develop. For Oldenburg, the ‘third place’ emerged as a response to a perceived lack of community life in the US. He believes that such informal places where strangers can meet and random encounters can occur are the lifeblood of healthy communities and cities.

However, Putnam’s concept of social capital is not without critics. Stolle and Hooghe report that Putnam’s thesis has been ‘variously characterized as plainly wrong, pessimistic or traditional’ (2005, p.150). They argue that Putnam’s work is inaccurate, exceptional, one-sided and irrelevant. There are also problems with ‘third place’, despite its common use in library and information science (LIS) literature. Many examples Oldenburg provides are descriptive and nostalgic, suggestive of a time that perhaps never existed. For example, Coontz (1992) and May (1988) examine home and family life in the US in the 1950s and their accounts suggest that life in that era was not as ideal as Oldenburg depicts. Furthermore, James and Scerri’s (2006) critique of the use of third place in relation to the Starbucks café chain points to potential tensions that can arise where third places emerge at the point of intersection between private commercial spaces and public spaces.

Both social capital and third place feed into a broader notion that Debono (2002) terms ‘social impact’. She explains that having an impact was part of the mandate of the original public libraries: ‘Public libraries were to divert behaviour from socially destructive activities and expose the populace to literature and acceptable recreation’ (Debono, 2002, p.80). An important distinction is made between outputs assessment and outcomes assessment. Outputs refer to quantitative measures such as circulation figures, while outcomes include ‘actual experiences, the value of experiences, benefits, and behavioural impacts’ (Debono, 2002, p.81). Social impact is concerned with outcomes as well as outputs, and in her assessment of existing literature on the social impact of libraries, she explains that she includes literature that evaluates social benefit, resources possessed by their associates’ (Portes, 1998, p.4). However, the more crucial point is that social capital is forged between mutual acquaintances and is derived from connections in exclusivity. Bourdieu describes social capital as a resource that higher classes mobilise to further their social position.
social capital and social value, noting that those terms are often used interchangeably. The positive impacts identified in the various reports examined by Debono included basic literacy, business/economic benefits, library as place/public space, community building, decreasing social isolation, and health and general information.

In the past fifteen years, there has been considerable research in LIS on the topic of libraries as place and their social impact. In 2000, a report by the University of Technology, Sydney found that libraries can act as communal gathering places as well as outreach centres (University of Technology, Sydney, 2000). There has been research on the importance of libraries for particular groups such as low-income households, migrants, and the homeless (Elbeshausen and Skov, 2004; Hodggets et al., 2008; Neuman and Celano, 2001); papers on how spaces within public libraries are used as meeting places or sites of interaction (Aabø et al., 2010; Aabø and Audunson, 2012; Given and Leckie, 2003; McKechnie et al., 2006); work on libraries as third places (Harris, 2007; Lawson, 2004; Lin et al., 2014; Scott, 2012); attempts to measure the library as a meeting place or site of social capital (Hillenbrand, 2005; Audunson et al., 2007) and studies that concentrate specifically on interactions and social capital within libraries (Ferguson, 2012; Goulding, 2004; Houghton et al., 2013; Johnson, 2012).

This literature highlights the way theoretical concepts have been applied by practitioners. Social capital, social impact, and the concept of the library as place have become tools used by librarians and library associations to measure the effects of public libraries on the communities they serve, as justification to both the libraries’ funding bodies and users. This literature thus becomes part of the library dispositif when it is moved from its theoretical base and given a practical form.

Social capital and third place are not the only scholarly approaches to understanding libraries as community spaces. Perhaps somewhat at odds with these notions, public libraries have also been variously characterised as sites of encounter (Fincher and Iveson, 2008), common spaces (Amin, 2012) and social infrastructures (Mattern, 2014a). These ideas offer alternative frameworks for understanding libraries as community spaces where social interactions can occur. Moreover, I suggest that these alternative understandings of interaction in libraries more accurately reflect the way the library users interviewed in this research used the library as a community space. The library as part of the community dispositif takes form not only in council documents, as I discuss in the following section, but in these more mundane interactions within a common space.

Public spaces, encounters with strangers and social connections between individuals who
live and work in close geographical proximity are seen by various scholars as important characteristics of healthy and liveable cities. Urban designers Jacobs and Appleyard (1987) argue that good urban environments include 'livability; identity and control; access to opportunity, imagination and joy; authenticity and meaning; open communities and public life; self-reliance; and justice' (1987, p.115). In relation to community and public spaces, they say:

A city should be more than a warring collection of interest groups, classes, and neighbourhoods; it should breed a commitment to a larger whole, to tolerance, justice, law, and democracy. The structure of the city should invite and encourage public life, not only through its institutions, but directly and symbolically through its public spaces. (Jacobs and Appleyard, 1987, p.116)

Architect and town planner Tibbalds (1992) similarly argues that the most important part of a city is its public realm and the public spaces in which human interaction occurs. Importantly, many of these urban encounters—and the opportunity for encounters in public spaces—are between strangers.10

Fincher and Iveson (2008) expand on the idea of encounter, suggesting that although the encounters themselves are unplanned, spaces for encounter need to be purposefully planned for. Public libraries can act as such sites of encounter in cities, and planning for public libraries not only is a way of planning for encounter but also aims for progressive redistribution in diverse cities. They observe that in the UK and Australia, librarians, planners and designers have foregrounded ‘public libraries as a space of encounter through which particular forms of conviviality can emerge’ (Fincher and Iveson, 2008, p.185).

Elaborating on this idea, Fincher and Iveson (2008) suggest the conviviality which emerges in the public library is premised on free and equal access and library users are simultaneously ‘users’ and ‘citizens’. They explain conviviality as ‘encounters with a certain intent or purpose’ (2008, p.155), which can be casual, somewhat detached, and nothing more than a simple greeting or acknowledgement to a familiar stranger or neighbour. This could mean,

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10 However, this is not to say that all strangers are equal, or that they are necessarily granted equal access to public space and public life. Groups such as minorities, migrants and the socio-economically disadvantaged may not have access to basic needs such as food, education and shelter, which limits their ability and right to participate in public life (Lefebvre 1968 in Amin, 2012). Fincher and Iveson (2008) recognise that different social groups within cities have different mobilities and potential for participation in democratic processes.
for example, feeling pleased to have others about\textsuperscript{111}, and speaking with them occasionally, but coexisting with them based on ‘civil inattention’ or ‘mutual non-interference’ (Fincher and Iveson, 2008, p.158). The concepts of encounter and conviviality jar with the ideas of social capital and third place, to some extent, in that proponents of encounter and conviviality accord casual and fleeting interactions greater significance.

Similarly, Amin suggests that the public library is an example of a common ground where multiplicity and social encounters can flourish: ‘[Common grounds] include the physical spaces – streets, retail spaces, libraries, parks, buildings – in which being with other humans and non-humans shapes sensibilities towards the urban commons, unknown strangers and multiplicity’ (2012, p.79). The space of the library itself is an important resource which can contribute to urban liveability and encounters in the city; the library’s value comes from more than the materials on its shelves.

It is the focus on different types of interaction between encounter and social capital that leads me to suggest that encounter is a more accurate way of understanding social interactions in libraries, despite the dominance of social capital within LIS literature. Encounter values brief and fleeting encounters; the presence of other strangers is enough to foster conviviality and urban liveability, whereas social capital emphasises deeper and more engaged interactions where friendships and bonds are formed. The types of interactions presented by encounter and conviviality are generally more likely to be the kind of interaction seen in libraries. Of the thirty library users interviewed, one respondent made friends in the library by attending a youth day event, and seven respondents participated in the library’s book group or knitting group\textsuperscript{112}, and in these scenarios, deeper relationships were formed between library users. However, for most participants, the community or social aspects were mentioned not because of relationships they had formed because of using the library, but rather because of the atmosphere and the feeling of being around others.

Furthermore, libraries not only act as community spaces in an everyday sense, they can become important pieces of social infrastructure that bring people together in times of calamity

\textsuperscript{111} Liane, a library user from Lane Cove Library, commented, ‘There’s something about being in a room full of people reading that feels nice.’

\textsuperscript{112} Four others were friends who met in the library as a book club, but who already knew each other before the book club and used the library as a meeting space.
Mattern (2014a). Mattern quotes Toyo Ito, architect of the Sendai Mediatheque library in Sendai, Japan, who explained that after the 2011 earthquake, officials reopened the library quickly because:

> It functions as a kind of cultural refuge in the city … Most people who use the building are not going there just to read a book or watch a film; many of them probably do not have any definite purpose at all. They go just to be part of the community in the building.

(Ito in Mattern, 2014a, p.5)

In both ordinary and extraordinary times, libraries are important community spaces. As a public space where anyone can enter and be sheltered in its cool or warmth, stay for the entirety of its opening hours, without the imperative to spend money, there are few alternatives to the public library.

6.4 Council discourse and community engagement

In Australia, the local level of government (also referred to as local councils) is responsible for most civil infrastructure and services, including local roads, street signs, waste collection, local parks and sporting grounds, local libraries, trees and footpaths (Parliament of New South Wales, n.d.). The Australian Government describes local governments as responsible for meeting community needs such as waste collection and public recreation facilities (Australian Government, n.d.). The almost interchangeable use of ‘local’ and ‘community’ in these descriptions highlight the scale at which these local municipal authorities operate and indicate how the term ‘community’ is understood by these governing bodies. Councils are required to consult with their communities and develop community strategic and operational plans that outline the council’s vision and goals for the future (Fairfield City Council, n.d.b). These relate to areas such as the society, natural environment, built environment, culture and economy of the LGA. This consultation, and the publication of the strategies and reports, highlights the transparency of knowledge between the governing authority and its constituency, a key part of the development of the liberal community (Joyce, 2003).
The term takes on additional meaning in council strategies and plans, as councils emphasise the importance of fostering connections and relationships among residents and organisations—that is, building community\(^{113}\). This is what I refer to when I suggest that the library is part of the community \textit{dispositif}: Local councils use ‘community’ as a strategy to manage the population, by encouraging residents to be engaged and active participants in their communities and providing resources for them to be self-governing. This aligns with Rose’s suggestion that in ‘government through community’, the individual has ‘bonds of obligation and responsibility’ (1999, p.176), and within the community, these bonds are direct and natural.

In outlining how a council plans to ‘build community’, strategies often refer to their libraries. The library provides services that engage with local residents (such as mobile libraries/housebound services), offers access to culture, learning and educational materials in a range of languages spoken by residents, and acts as a physical site in which people can meet and develop interpersonal connections with their fellow residents. In the community \textit{dispositif}, the library is a key institution used by councils to encourage the development of community as well as transforming residents into members of that community. In this section, I examine the way each of the three case study libraries and councils interpret and develop community.

\subsection*{6.4.1 Narellan Library and Camden Council}

The \textit{Camden Council Amended Delivery Program 2013/14 – 2016/17} names one of its key objectives as an ‘enriched and connected community’. It defines this as a community that ‘involves arts and culture, community safety, healthy lifestyles and community health, enrichment through learning and information, and recreation and leisure to build social capital and cohesion’ (Camden Council, 2014a, p.141). This is a large, multifaceted aim that includes a range of arenas and highlights the governmental role of the municipality—the goal is to manage the population so that the citizens are safe, healthy, educated, engaged with arts and culture, and act as one cohesive community. The community \textit{dispositif} is clear: the overarching goal is the creation of an enriched and connected community imbued with social capital and social cohesion.

\footnote{Libraries play a role in promoting social interaction outside of the library, too. Parkes Public Library launched ‘Stories on a Coffee Cup’ in 2014. A local writers’ group wrote short stories that were printed on coffee cups and then distributed free to local coffee shops (Dawson, 2015; Dog-eared, 2014; Parkes Champion-Post, 2014). The aim was to promote story-telling as well as the library, and encourage conversation between strangers.}
In the previous section, I noted that brief encounters were more common interactions seen in libraries than the kind leading to long-term friendships and social capital, but that is not to say social capital cannot be fostered in libraries. The Camden Library Service is unusual in that it has a particularly strong focus on engaging with its community and hosting events that can lead to the development of social capital. Its council documents, library tagline (‘vibrant places people spaces’), and the explicitly stated aim of building social capital makes clear their focus on community.

The library plays an important part in achieving these aims: it is a part of the council that delivers outcomes related to recreation, leisure, learning and social cohesion. The council’s delivery program explicitly states the outcomes to be delivered by the library as:

- People feel they belong
- There is a community pride
- There is a commitment to learning (Camden Council, 2014a, p.141)

These goals reveal the desire of the council, through the library, to instil certain emotions in the population and to communalise the individual.

The *Camden Council 2013/14 Delivery Program Report* outlines the activities undertaken by the council as part of Camden 2040, the council’s long-term vision and plan for the LGA. This document forms part of the council’s annual report. Document 6.1 shows the contents page of this report. There are multiple components to the objective of developing a cohesive community—or multiple apparatuses of the community dispositif—and the library service is a significant contributor to these.
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The report specifies the goals of the library service: ‘This service aims to provide library services to the community; encouraging lifelong learning, community connections, developing skills and knowledge, and providing a safe and welcoming place to meet’ (Camden Council, 2014a, p.135). The goals underscore the library’s informational role (‘encouraging lifelong learning, developing skills and knowledge’) as well as its social role (‘encouraging community connections and providing a safe and welcoming place to meet’). ‘Community’ is used here to mean a particular geographical and social group: the people who work and reside in the Camden municipality. The way the word is used reflects a certain warmth or favourability, and reflects the council’s aim of both providing for and producing a socially cohesive populace.

This community focus indicates a shift in priority, where the creation of a communalised individual and opportunities for encounter and conviviality are becoming more important governing devices. Librarian E from Narellan Library explained:

_We’ve got a very broad idea of what a library should be. Community, community, people, people, people. Our focus is always on people not on the resources, so it’s always about the people, it’s about the community, and it’s about relationships within the community, and with the staff and partnerships with other organisations._

This emphasis on community underscores the position of the library within the city: it is not an isolated building or institution; rather, it is embedded within a broader network of public and commercial organisations that form a city’s cultural and knowledge infrastructure (Mattern, 2014a). Librarian E’s quote also highlights her position as a council employee. The official position of the council is to emphasise the individuals and their connections with each other, with the council, and with various community organisations. The library becomes an apparatus within the council’s community-building strategy, which is further evidenced by the library’s official tagline, ‘Vibrant spaces, people places’ (Baget-Juleff and Miscamble, 2003).

Council discourse, both in terms of council documents and the comments from librarians, highlight the importance of council branding and vision. The way community and the library is positioned in these reports and strategy documents certainly fit within broader networks of government institutions. They specifically reflect the characteristics of the population itself but, more importantly, these documents and the discourse around community communicates how the municipality wishes to portray itself. More than the other two case study
libraries, Camden Council and Narellan Library emphasises the importance of engaging with the community and presenting an image of a council and library service that is connected to its constituency.

Document 6.2 and the report from which it is drawn, the *Camden Council Amended Delivery Program 2013/14 – 2016/17*, reveal the position of the library within the council. The table outlines the legislative and municipal context in which the library service is situated and highlights the position of the library as a site of public education and learning. The library is also clearly situated in a broader network of learning and reading institutions, as a municipal organisation that has ‘key partnerships’ with other levels of government like the State Library of NSW (SLNSW), government departments and educational bodies.
What are Library Services and Why Does Council Do It?
This service aims to provide library services to the community; encouraging lifelong learning, community connections, developing skills and knowledge, and providing a safe and welcoming place to meet.

This service creates the following outcomes
- The community has access to broad range information and lifelong learning opportunities.
- Local heritage and cultural information is protected for future generations
- Target groups are engaged and actively participate in library activities

Council’s role is
- A provider of spaces to meet and access information
- A provider of information to meet the diverse information needs of the community.
- A provider of programs and service for key target groups
- A facilitator of lifelong learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basis for the service</th>
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<td></td>
<td>University of Western Sydney, TAFE Outreach and TAFE NSW</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Services collated with libraries including OHS, CARHS and CCC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Book suppliers and publishers</td>
<td></td>
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Document 6.2 Library services, from the Camden Council Amended Delivery Program 2013/14 – 2016/17
An important point revealed in Document 6.2 is the role of the library in encouraging ‘community connections’ and providing a ‘safe and welcoming place to meet’. These two characteristics echo points made by library professionals in their assessments of the library as a site of social capital and connections. The focus of the library as a safe and welcoming space for community connections is similar to the community-mindedness of libraries Australia in the 1950s—libraries continue to be important municipal sites in the civic realm for the purposes of developing a sense of community and social cohesion.

One specific way the library supports a sense of community and contributes to the development of social bonds is by hosting events designed to encourage social connections, such as knitting circles. The Camden Library Service holds knitting groups at both Camden and Narellan Libraries (see Figure 6.1). Librarian E explained:

"The local community has a strong interest in textiles and there is a local textiles competition that happens every year in the Camden L.G.A. We have three knitters’ groups that meet at the library each week. Narellan library’s, the knitters’ group that meets at Narellan library, meets every Thursday morning..."
and have [sic] done for the last six or seven years. We get thirty plus women every Thursday, sitting around knitting.

The knitting group\textsuperscript{114} reflects the interests of residents in the local area, and is one example of the community events Librarian E spoke of earlier. It is an activity that engages the local community and allows residents to meet new people and utilise the library’s space. This is an example of the new technologies of identities, lifestyles, choices and consumptions that are somewhat separate from the governmental field but allow for new identity formation and community bonds (Rose, 1999, p.179). The knitting group at Camden Library was in its sixth year at the time I interviewed Natasha, a member of the group, in 2013. She spoke about relationships that are formed through the knitting group:

\textit{Just things like our knitting group—the one at Narellan is huge and it’s through the day and it’s brought people out of their house who haven’t been out of their house for years, all the older ladies who have been isolated have joined this and made friends, friendships out of it, and I think that’s fantastic.}

These knitting circles are not specifically related to books, reading, and information. Instead, they speak to the library’s vision of being a community space that facilitates social connections and interpersonal relationships. They also highlight the role these groups and events play in encouraging residents to become active and engaged, including those who may have been more socially isolated.

The new inflections of community \textit{dispositif} that focus on social capital and convivial interactions are clear at Narellan Library, in both official council discourse—in terms of council strategic documents and the comments by Librarian E as a council employee—and in the practical ways that community is promoted within the library. The council’s goal of creating a cohesive community with engaged, educated members is a governing strategy comprised of multiple elements. The library service is one part of the council’s community \textit{dispositif}, and within the library individual devices such as knitting groups are used to encourage community.

\textsuperscript{114} Knitting groups became popular following a nationwide charitable movement that began in 1992 to knit wraps for survivors of civil war in Mozambique (Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 2011b).
6.4.2 Lane Cove Library and Lane Cove Council

The priorities of Lane Cove Council are closely linked to the physical natural environment of the LGA, the abilities and aspirations of the population, and its relatively small size. Lane Cove LGA has a population of roughly 33,000 people115 and the council describes the open spaces, natural environment and ‘village atmosphere’ as defining features of the locality (Lane Cove Council, 2013).

Like Camden Council, community is a strong focus. In Lane Cove Council’s most recent publicly available annual report, it lists as its first guiding principle: ‘To develop a strong inclusive community that promotes access, equity and participation in decision making, working towards a better Lane Cove for everyone’ (Lane Cove Council, 2013, p.4). This vision is reflected in the council’s Community Strategic Plan 2025 which guides the management plan of the council (Lane Cove Council, n.d.c). The first goal of this plan is ‘an inclusive, interconnected and active community’, with the first objective of this plan being ‘community connections’ and the second ‘community well being’116.

These strategies and objectives highlight an important focus of the council. In managing both the physical environment and population over which it has responsibility, a key objective is to foster a cohesive, self-reliant populace. This community dispositif has various layers: it is not simply about ‘community’ generally but specificities such as connections and well-being. This is achieved through the arrangement of instruments such as policies and plans as well as material and tangible tools like library services.

Documents such as the annual report, community strategic plan, delivery program and operational plan (Lane Cove Council, 2014) reveal the council’s responsibilities and its plans to meet these responsibilities. An overarching theme is the provision of infrastructure and programs to assist individuals govern their own lives and become productive members of society.

The council’s Community Strategic Plan document includes two sections. One contains indicators the council intend on using to measure its objectives and goals. The second contains a

115 By comparison, the Camden LGA has a forecasted population of 77,000 in 2016 (forecast.id, 2014) and the Fairfield City LGA has a forecasted population of 200,000 in 2016 (forecast.id, 2012).

116 The council defines ‘community well being’ as ‘community’s satisfaction with life, incorporating physical, mental, social and spiritual aspects’ (Lane Cove Council, n.d., p.7).
clear statement: ‘Actions for the community – what you can do’. Under the first goal of an ‘inclusive, interconnected and active community’, the plan suggests that individuals can

- Know and talk to your neighbours
- Use local facilities and services
- Participate in local healthy lifestyle activities
- Be aware of your safety and the safety of others (Lane Cove Council, n.d.c, p.17)

The individual is understood not as a passive subject that needs to be governed in all aspects of life, but rather an autonomous and self-reliant citizen who can contribute to the wider community-building project if suitably equipped. This is in line with Rose’s (1996a) and Marinetto’s (2003) conceptions of governing through communities and active citizenship: the individual plays an important, active role as part of the community; it has been ‘responsibilised’ and made a partner in governing and control (Rose, 2000a).
Community Wellbeing

Library Promotions

Council continues to develop the Lane Cove Library as a community hub and key player in reducing social isolation and as such promotes a range of programs and events to the Lane Cove community including:

- Movies @ Lane Cove,
- BookChats,
- Poets and Writers in Residence groups,
- Author/Public Talks,
- Travel Talks,
- Book Sales and
- Knit-ins (at Lane Cove and Greenwich Libraries).

The Library was part of the planning group for the inaugural Voce-n-Ale Festival. Library events for the festival included a Manga workshop by David Lovegrove, a screening of The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel, Late n Lively @ Lane Cove, book launch of the Poets in Residencia Anthology 2012 and a screening of Dr Seuss’ The Lorax. The Library also provided a venue for the closing event which featured James Valentine as MC.

The meeting and training rooms are very popular with community groups and the study room is regularly booked by students. The Junior Library and the Storytime Room are always busy, with groups of parents with young children each morning, class visits and school students in the afternoons.

The Local Studies section continues to plan local history talks and family history workshops and produced a monthly article for The Village Observer. Borrowers seem fascinated to learn more about Lane Cove’s history. These initiatives encourage the community to contribute more information and photographs to the Local Studies Collection.

The Library has hosted a variety of displays in the last year including displays promoting Council initiatives, development proposals and general displays that link into Library collections. Featured displays in 2012/13 included History of Sport in Lane Cove, NAILOC Week, Olympic spirit, Travel, Melbourne Cup, Aerial photographs of Lane Cove, Advent Calendar, Robbie Burns, Chinese New Year, Lane Cove Concert Band, Craft, International Book and Copyright Day and 30th anniversary of Possum Magic.

Library staff are actively involved in promoting use of the Library’s collections and services. Activities included Good Health Check talk, various author talks, Food Photography, Divorce & de facto relationships, Law Week talk, A history of 19th Century music and a history of 20th Century music. Special events included Check Lit writing workshop by Lisa Heidke, Short story writing workshop by Geoff Bartlett, Seniors Morning tea @ Greenwich, Skin Care and Make up for Seniors, Storytime for Adults, Facebook for Seniors, Try a Craft: Beading, Try a Craft: Scrapbooking and Australia’s Biggest Morning Tea.

The Library regularly produces posters, flyers and eNewsletters to keep the public informed about Library events, collections and activities.

Library Knit-Ins

In 2012-13 both the Lane Cove and Greenwich Libraries hosted quarterly knit-ins. These events allow knitters to contribute squares (and completed blankets) for the ‘Wrap with Love’ charity. This organisation supplies blankets to disadvantaged communities both in Australia and overseas.

The knit-ins attract people of all ages. In addition to contributing to a worthy cause and assisting those in need the knit-ins help the participants to make social connections in a relaxed and welcoming environment.
The library is positioned as part of the council that contributes to community and cultural goals, as seen in Document 6.3. This page from Lane Cove Council’s annual report highlights the contribution of the library to the council’s community goals and the various ways that the library operates as part of the community dispositif. Broadly speaking, the library service is one instrument through which the council achieves its goals around community connections, community well-being, and developing a cohesive community. However, within the strategy of the ‘library service’, there are various devices that contribute to the library as a community space. Document 6.3 lists numerous events (including library knit-ins, which were also seen in Narellan and Camden Libraries), explains that the library is a space for residents to learn community information and news, and reports how library staff members engage with the community.

An interesting tension ought to be noted here, between public libraries and their councils. Public libraries in Australia are part of local council authorities117 (as discussed in chapters one and three) but still have a need to justify their existence to its council118. Often, libraries are measured by statistics such as circulation figures and visitor counts, which become important indicators of a library’s value to its council. This page’s comprehensive list of the library activities that make it a community hub can be seen both as a justification from the library to the council of its value but, simultaneously, it is a way for the council to show the public a visible way it is achieving its goals119.

Lane Cove Council’s delivery program and operational plan is a document that clearly outlines statistics and metrics to complement the annual report. Document 6.4 shows the performance indicators of the library, which sits within the Division of Human Services.

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117 Although many day-to-day decisions are made by library staff, large operational matters such as budgets, staffing, external communication (such as with media), and some policies need to be approved by higher levels of management within the council.

118 This is a more pressing concern in the UK presently, with cuts to local governments affecting the provision of a range of services including libraries.

119 Using concrete evidence to prove a library’s worth is not a particularly new strategy. In 1996 the Lane Cove Council and Library Council of NSW funded a report that examined the social role and economic benefit of the public library. It found that ‘the main value of the general use of the library is overwhelmingly community or socially orientated’ (Briggs et al., 1996, p.31).
## Principal Activity – Human Services

**Program:** Library and Information Services  
**Activities:** Lending Service, Information Service, Collection Development and Technical Services, Local Studies and Council and Community Archives, Programming and Publishing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ongoing Performance Indicators:</th>
<th>2012/13 Previous</th>
<th>2013/14 Current</th>
<th>Immediate target</th>
<th>Long term target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community awareness- Library membership per capita</td>
<td>78.5%</td>
<td>Not Yet Available</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circulation - Library items circulated per capita</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>Not Yet Available</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library visits - Number of visitors to the Library</td>
<td>389,578</td>
<td>Not Yet Available</td>
<td>380,000</td>
<td>400,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer satisfaction (Annual Survey)</td>
<td>8.43</td>
<td>Not Yet Available</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information provided - Reference queries satisfied</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>Not Yet Available</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet access - Number of Internet hours booked</td>
<td>7,893</td>
<td>Not Yet Available</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>6,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currency of collection - Number of items acquired per capita</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>Not Yet Available</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>0.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archival service - Number of archives boxes processed</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>Not Yet Available</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs for adults &amp; children - Number of sessions</td>
<td>456</td>
<td>Not Yet Available</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housebound service - Number of visits to housebound clients</td>
<td>2,429</td>
<td>Not Yet Available</td>
<td>2,400</td>
<td>2,400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Document 6.4 shows indicators that clearly link the library with the council’s broader goal of connecting with its community. It highlights the specific ways that the library operates as an apparatus within the community dispositif, such as library visits, programs for adults and children, and the number of visits to housebound clients.

However, the library’s value arises not only from its position as a community hub, as it states in Document 6.3; the library also plays a part in achieving the council’s other strategic goals, such as education and culture, that contribute in more indirect ways to the development of an engaged community. This is seen in Document 6.5 and Figure 6.2. These other goals of education and culture are part of the broader community strategy, components of the community dispositif that contribute to an identity of the community and a sense of belonging among its members. The library plays a part in both goals.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Link to Council Plans</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Link to State Plans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 5  | **Health** | To encourage healthy lifestyles at all life stages. To ensure the healthcare needs of the community are met. | Social Plan Goals W3 & M1, Recreation Plan Theme 9 & Sustainability Action Plan PE 3. | Council, Community Organisations, Community Groups and State Government | Northern Sydney Regional Action Plan Priority:  
- Return Quality Services – Health  
- Improve access to healthcare  
Draft Metropolitan Strategy for Sydney  
Priority:  
- Productivity and Prosperity |

| 5  | **Education** | To increase access to high quality learning opportunities and education services. | Social Plan Goal C4. | Council, Community Organisations, Community Groups and State Government | NSW 2021 Priority:  
- Return Quality Services – Education  
Northern Sydney Regional Action Plan Priority:  
- Improve social connections, support for vulnerable communities and the ageing  
Draft Metropolitan Strategy for Sydney  
Priority:  
- Productivity and Prosperity |
Document 6.5 shows objectives five and six of the first goal for an interconnected and active community. The importance of the library for objective six—education—is clear. The library provides resources and support for both students enrolled in formal education and individuals who want to engage in self-directed education (lifelong learning), thus lending support to the development of a self-governing citizen and member of the Lane Cove community.

An interesting element of this document is the three columns on the right-hand side of the page. These columns are present for the objectives and strategies throughout the document and indicate where certain objectives and the organisations involved in meeting them sit within broader governmental frameworks. In achieving the objective for education, the library works in conjunction with local schools, government agencies and community organisations. It fits within not only local council goals but also State Government plans.

Lane Cove Council and its local population has a strong interest in art and local culture, evident when Librarian J showed me the stack collection\textsuperscript{120} in the library’s basement that also included an array of paintings by local artists owned by the council. The library plays a part in the council’s cultural goals and objectives related to ideas of allegiance and affinity, which are important in connecting the individual with the community (see Rose, 1999). The Community Strategic Plan lists two elements of its cultural vision:

Lane Cove will be recognised for its unique identity – a cultural and creative place that embraces and celebrates its diversity, a place where performance and visual arts abound and public art is integrated into the structures and the open spaces where people gather. (Lane Cove Council, n.d.c, p.34 emphasis in original)

and

Lane Cove will be known for its rich culture – a dynamic and culturally active community that celebrates its history, creativity, differences and achievements. Residents

\textsuperscript{120} The stack collection is not publicly accessible for browsing but can be searched for on the library catalogue and requested. It includes old books with low circulation and books that are perhaps old or worn but difficult to replace and still ought to be in the collection.
will have many opportunities to reach their full cultural potential. Local talent will be nurtured and promoted. (Lane Cove Council, n.d.c, p.34 emphasis in original)

The report outlines how the council is working towards this vision and includes strategies such as support for cultural groups, programs for people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds, Aboriginal heritage programs, local history collections, and a public art strategy. The library is a key component of these strategies. It incorporates a well-developed local history collection, caters its collection to users from a range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds (see chapter five), and is a site for public artwork (as seen in Figure 6.2) and exhibitions for artwork owned by the council.

Culture and community at Lane Cove Council is closely linked, and while culture is understood by the council as an important of the identity of Lane Cove and the development of the local community, it is not viewed as beneath community in a hierarchy of council goals. The cultural role of the library in Lane Cove is no less important than its position as a community
hub, as Librarian J reflected at the conclusion of her interview: ‘A lot of libraries talk about themselves now as social hub. I tend to say social and cultural, because culture’s a big thing in Lane Cove.’

There are therefore several ways that the library adds to Lane Cove Council’s vision of a cohesive community comprised of self-reliant and motivated individuals. This includes events and programs that actively encourage residents to meet and interact. But there are also more subtle strategies. The library’s contribution to the council’s education objective affirms its position as a site of learning where citizens can participate in their own self-learning and discovery processes, similar to the library ideals of the nineteenth century, and the use of its space for the display of council-owned local art contributes to the council’s identity and cultural goals.

6.4.3 Whitlam Library and Fairfield City Council

As discussed in chapter three, Cabramatta (and Fairfield LGA) is a culturally and linguistically diverse area, in contrast to Narellan and Lane Cove\textsuperscript{121}. It is also a more socio-economically disadvantaged area with a higher proportion of low-income households and higher unemployment than the greater Sydney average. As such, the way the Fairfield City Council and its library understands and interacts with their community is different to the other two libraries and councils, though there are commonalities that can be seen in official council documents.

The local population in the Fairfield LGA displays what Koleth describes as ‘cacophonous diversity’, where multiple cultures, ethnicities and voices have displaced the ‘Anglo-Australian hegemony’ (2015, p.237, 241-242). She suggests that Fairfield is exceptional, as opposed to archetypal, in ‘its embodiment of what multiculturalism could look like in Australia’ (2015, p.238). By this, Koleth means that multiculturalism in Fairfield has generated productive, positive impacts. It has brought about a community displaying resourcefulness, empathy and co-operation, where a sense of belonging is fostered amongst groups from different cultural backgrounds.

This exceptional multiculturalism was made possible through connections between residents: ‘social networks generated through community concentration were a crucial support to

\textsuperscript{121} See also Gapps (2010) for an in-depth exploration of the history of Fairfield City, including its periods of migration and multiculturalism.
migrants in coping with racism, histories of conflict and trauma and surviving under straitened economic circumstances’ (Koleth, 2015, p.244). The concentration of migrants from disadvantaged backgrounds meant that culturally diverse communities could be built, and these contributed to social cohesion and a sense of belonging for these residents (Burnley, 2000; Dunn, 1998). Social connections, particularly ‘quotidian interactions at the neighbourhood level’, were especially important in developing these communities and provided a counter to the prejudice and negative experiences that was encountered from the wider population (Koleth, 2015, p.247). Community, in this situation, was developed through bonds over difference, isolation and difficult life circumstances—in a stark contrast to the social connections developed from more privileged positions in Narellan and Lane Cove.

Cabramatta therefore embodies a different kind of governing through community than at Narellan/Camden and Lane Cove, as migrant groups in each area experienced different difficulties related to language, culture, employment and feeling a sense of home and belonging. This difference also results in distinctive properties of this particular community dispositif, with a greater focus on providing support so that residents can become self-reliant members of the community such as with English conversation classes and literacy programs and a much greater emphasis on multiculturalism and diversity.

Document 6.6 shows part of Fairfield City Council’s Annual Report 2013-2014 which highlights how the council supports multiculturalism. The report states that ‘Diverse and Multicultural Services is a core business of Council’ (Fairfield City Council, 2014, p.39). There is a focus on appropriately serving diverse constituencies as well as providing a platform where all members of the community can practice forms of cultural maintenance. The way ‘community’ is understood here is less about connections and cohesion among people from similar demographic backgrounds, as was the case for Camden and Lane Cove councils, and more about providing opportunities for multiple ethnic communities to co-exist under a broader banner of the Fairfield community.

Notions of the responsible individual appear in the annual report in a similar way to how Lane Cove suggests individuals can contribute to the community. The Fairfield City Council Community Strategic Plan 2012-2022 states that ‘everyone has a part to play in achieving our community goals’ and lists the ways that Federal Government, State Government, local council, not-for-profit organisations, the private sector and individuals can contribute (Fairfield City Council, n.d.b, p.19). This puts responsibility on the individual as an active citizen. The inclusive
language used (‘our community’) broadens ownership and responsibility from the council to a wider array of actors.

There are thus similarities between Fairfield City Council and the other two councils discussed in this chapter—similarities that are emblematic of local council policy and discourse in general. Like Lane Cove Council, Fairfield City Council’s Community Strategic Plan lists several themes and strategic areas of focus: community wellbeing, places and infrastructure, environmental sustainability, local economy and employment, and governance and leadership. Such documents outline councils’ specific objectives and strategies in these areas.
Diversity and Multicultural Activities

Diverse and Multicultural Services is a core business of Council. Council supports refugees and emerging migrant communities by providing specialist advice and to enhance cooperation across the local multicultural services sector.

This year’s priority focus areas included settlement, health, education, employment, and the strengthening of “soft infrastructure” to best support refugee and migrant communities. Council convenes and/or supports various inter-agencies/networks to give a platform to the community. Working in partnership and encouraging collaboration between agencies allows Council to better use its resources to advocate and deliver services to the community.

Events and Celebrations
Council supports local organisations with celebrations and events that encourage community participation and community cohesion. Annual events regularly supported include Refugee Week, Harmony Day, Anti-Poverty Week and International Women’s Day.

Community Engagement, and Access for Asylum Seekers and Migrants
Council actively supports and participates in community-based partnerships that assist the emerging refugee communities of Fairfield City to develop their social/cultural infrastructure; and build linkages between these communities and mainstream service providers. For example, the Community Services EXPO 2014 – for Migrants and Asylum Seekers was coordinated by Council in partnership with St Vincent de Paul Society and the Spanish and Latin American Association for Social Assistance (SLASA). The Expo provided an opportunity for 36 local service providers, government and non-government organisations to distribute and share information, build partnerships and network with other agencies. The event focused on engaging and assisting humanitarian entrants, asylum seekers and migrants.

The Expo targeted the suburbs of Mt Pritchard, Cabramatta West, St Johns Park, and Bunnings. St Vincent de Paul identified these as areas of great need due to the increase of refugees and asylum seekers urgently needing basic services.
At Fairfield City Council, the operations and facilities of the library fall under two themes: community wellbeing and places and infrastructure. The Community Strategic Plan lists two strategies for community wellbeing as ‘provid[ing] community facilities and services that are accessible and affordable’ and ‘improv[ing] our community’s future through our diverse cultural knowledge and skills’ (Fairfield City Council, n.d.b, p.23). Both goals are at least partially fulfilled by the library.

The library is a free and accessible resource where the community can meet, interact, and develop new skills and knowledges. The library offers a range of classes and events such as English Conversation Classes and the Family Literacy Program (see chapter three) that serve to equip library users with the skills necessary to fully participate in an English-speaking country. These programs and the library more generally act as part of an apparatus to produce self-reliant and productive citizens.

On a less specific and directed level, the library is also a site where everyday encounters can occur. Koleth suggests, ‘Community-building involved a combination of local institutional strategies and quotidian practices and interactions of residents’ (2015, p.246). I observe that the library can act as one such place where quotidian practices and mundane, everyday encounters happen—especially in the context of events such as storytime. The library is not an official meeting place for migrants (like the Immigrant Women’s Health Service in Cabramatta, located just one block from Whitlam Library), but it is an informal site where migrant parents can meet other parents. Librarian C mentioned that there were many mothers who attended storytime but did not speak English well or at all, and this gave them an opportunity to meet other parents and develop skills to read to their children (see chapter four). The library is therefore an important site for encounter and informal participation in the community.

6.5 The community dispositif in the library

The case study libraries reveal interesting observations about community dispositifs, local councils and public libraries. First, ‘community’ has become quantifiable and measured in strategic objectives and deliverables, much like the concept of governing through community used by Rose to describe a particular style of governance in mid-twentieth century Britain. Second, at the level of local government in Australia, community takes on two meanings simultaneously. It refers to both the strategy of managing or influencing the populace—as in, building a connected, engaged, diverse community, or what I have referred to here as the community dispositif—as well
referring to the local population itself. Local councils, through their strategies and actions, as outlined in their policies and plans, aim to build certain types of communities through co-operation and consultation with their populations. Third, and finally, public libraries are a vital instrument through which local councils build and engage with their populations. Councils promote library services as actions they have taken to meet community-related strategic goals; the library has become a deliverable. Public libraries are not the only way community goals are met, but they are a key and highly visible part of the community dispositif that brings together diverse groups of people.

In this final section, I look at the specific ways that libraries become ‘places’ or ‘community hubs’. Debono (2002) observes that ‘library as place’ was the most frequently identified impact area in her analysis of literature on the social value of libraries, and the council documents examined in the previous section highlight the importance of the library as a welcoming space or environment. Here, I concentrate on the strategies used by libraries to become welcoming places. In doing so, I examine the way that these strategies fuse with the notion of the community dispositif in library spaces. In professional library discourse—whether in reports and recommendations on designing library spaces or in the comments of librarians interviewed in this research—the idea of creating comfortable and inviting spaces reminiscent of private domestic spaces is pervasive. However, as I suggest in this section, there remain many elements of library space that signify its publicness and status as a local government institution.

Libraries are increasingly being designed with spaces for long-stay use, and appropriate amenities and high comfort levels. The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) observes:

Users who may be spending many hours a day in them will expect the kind of related comfort services not traditionally associated with libraries (though increasingly associated with modern bookshop chains) such as cafes, toilets, and even lounge areas with armchairs for browsing and relaxing. (Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment, 2003, p.8)

This strategy of designing comfortable spaces is often given labels associated with private spaces. The term ‘living room in the city’ has been used to describe public libraries in Scandinavia and the UK since the early 2000s (Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment, 2003; Worpole, 2004), and this concept has gained broader traction over the past
decade or so. Worpole (2004) observes that as more library services went online (such as the catalogue) and home internet access became more common, the library became ‘de-institutionalised’ with interior design and furnishing used to create a more domestic atmosphere. This can also be seen as a reflection of changing household patterns. With an ageing population and more single-person households, libraries have become more important as spaces where interaction and co-presence with other people is possible (State Library of New South Wales, 2012, pp.33, 49). In addition, with greater urban consolidation as more people move to small apartments (Easthope and Randolph, 2009), the library offers a space where leisure and entertainment pursuits can be undertaken.

*People Places*, the SLNSW guidelines for creating library spaces, notes that one current trend in public libraries is the ‘community living room’ concept. This report, as mentioned in chapter four, is a planning tool produced by the SLNSW and endorsed by the Library Council of NSW. Its purpose is to support local council authorities in planning library buildings by offering guidelines on their design ‘which respond to our dynamic environment and optimise the use of resources, while at the same time providing library buildings which will meet the needs of the community well into the future’ (State Library of New South Wales, 2012, p.iii). This report is a governing device that establishes the concept of a ‘community living room’ in a Sydney context and is a tool used in libraries across NSW. On the trend of ‘community living rooms’, the report states:

Arising from the idea of **social capital** is the trend for people to increasingly seek community participation and meaningful human interaction in the safe, neutral environment of public libraries.

Libraries have embraced the role of the ‘**third place**’, understanding that people seek refuge in libraries or choose to spend many hours in them for a range of reasons, and now provide settings for this to occur (Oldenburg, 1989). Today, the relevance of libraries is even greater to a demographic which is increasingly transient and multicultural, assisting in social cohesion and cross cultural understanding through enhancing positive social interaction.

The notion of libraries as **community living rooms** signifies a departure from the function and atmosphere of libraries of the past. Floor space, once dominated by the collection, is gradually being converted to living spaces and social hubs – comfortable areas to relax and socialise. Like public squares and street cafes, a modern public library
provides a place which puts users at ease, a place of mutual respect for people to meet and pass time, in addition to its core information services. (State Library of New South Wales, 2012, p.21, emphases in original)

This excerpt of the SLNSW report is quoted at length because it highlights the way that theoretical concepts are applied ‘in the wild’. They have been adopted by authoritative library bodies like the SLNSW and the Library Council of NSW and influence local library spaces through their guidelines and planning tools. Social capital and third place are no longer only academic notions about connections and community life, but have become practical techniques suggested in reports that have a material power; they are part of the library dispositif. The manipulation of environment to create particular atmospheres is an important element of the community dispositif. Atmosphere is a tool used by libraries that aims to achieve two goals: creating comfortable spaces in which community connections can be fostered, and encouraging certain behaviours around sociability and conviviality. How this tool is used reveals curious contradictions of library spaces—they are fundamentally public, with influences from the private commercial sphere, attempting to recreate a private domestic atmosphere.

As discussed in chapter four, the term ‘atmosphere’ has been used in variously in multiple fields of study. Most relevant here is the use of atmosphere in retail space design and consumer behaviour research. Kotler drew attention to the use of atmosphere as a marketing tool:

One of the most significant features of the total product is the place where it is bought or consumed. In some cases, the place, more specifically the atmosphere of the place, is more influential than the product itself in the purchase decision. In some cases, the atmosphere is the primary product. (Kotler, 1974, p.48, emphases in original)

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122 Many of the ‘creating atmosphere’ tactics seen in libraries were first seen in the 1990s in large chain bookshops in the US, such as Barnes and Noble and Waldenbooks that encouraged people to browse and linger. Bookshops became a destination and book-buying became an experience. These commercial enterprises also adopted the language of ‘communities’, and created attractive spaces that functioned as ‘third spaces’ for developing ‘communities’ (Scott, 2012).
Kotler uses the term ‘atmospherics’ to describe the conscious design and planning of spaces to encourage particular consumer behaviours, and explains that ‘atmosphere’, as a descriptor of the quality of a space, is understood in sensory terms. He lists visual dimensions of atmosphere (colour, brightness, shapes, sizes), aural dimensions (volume, pitch), olfactory dimensions (scent, freshness), and tactile dimensions (softness, smoothness, temperature) (Kotler, 1974, p.51). These are factors that are, for the most part, controlled by the designers of a space to encourage certain behaviours—generally to attract customers and boost spending.

However, despite the literature advocating libraries as an urban living room and design attempts to domesticate the space, the library remains a public institution with different needs and expectations to a private home. It may incorporate elements that attempt to evoke a sense of homeliness, but continues to be a public space distinct from the privatised domestic sphere. Recent research from Norway found that library users and non-users had many understandings of what a public library is, and while the social role of the library was seen as important, its role as a non-commercial institution providing access to knowledge was also fundamental (Evjen and Audunson, 2009). This indicates that the library is a multifaceted, heterogeneous space that, at its core, is a public institution—but it incorporates elements of décor borrowed from the domestic realm to create an atmosphere conducive to conviviality and social interaction.

Indeed, the passages from CABE and the SLNSW quoted earlier are less about transforming the library into a private, domestic space (as might be suggested by the term ‘living room’) and more about enhancing comfort levels. Shove (2003) reports that ‘comfort’ as a physiological state emerged as a concept in the eighteenth century, and involves a range of factors such as temperature, indoor climate, furniture and ergonomics. Standards and guidelines about indoor climate have been developed by scientists and engineers, and understandings of anatomy and ergonomics have influenced furniture design. The aim of libraries in creating public community spaces is centred on comfort and borrows elements from the home to achieve this.

The planning of the library to act as a comfortable space that encourages encounter and conviviality evokes notions of liberal governmentality and governing through community—establishing frameworks to encourage self-culture and self-knowledge. In describing the design of library space at Narellan Library, Librarian E revealed:

*We use as the tag for all of the Camden libraries that libraries are ‘vibrant places, people spaces’. We focus very heavily on the importance of having an inviting environment that’s tailored to the tastes and interests of the community that it serves.*
This highlights the importance of the library as place and how serving the community is a key goal of the library. The space becomes the setting for the development of a socially cohesive populace with the potential for self-regulation. As Joyce observes, ‘The idea of the free library was central to the creation of a new sort of public, one constituted in a civic, urban public sphere.’ (Joyce, 2003, p.129) Rose’s notion of governing through community can be seen as a transformation of the eighteenth-century form of civic governance Joyce refers to, where society is regenerated through the building of self-responsible communities (see Rose 1999, 2000b).

In governing through community, instruments and strategies are employed for reform, regulation or mobilisation (Rose, 1996a). Space is one instrument that acts upon the subjects of government; the arrangement of space within the library plays a role in ordering behaviour (see chapter four). There is, however, another way of understanding space as a governmental instrument: the spatial aspect in building self-governing communities and how conviviality and encounter might be facilitated or encouraged. To this end, the space of the library is designed in ways to allow for this conviviality and opportunities for public interaction.

The two concurrent roles of the library as a governing, public institution and a convivial space are evident at Narellan Library. There is a focus on fostering social capital and developing a cohesive community, as discussed in council documents and the People Places report. The council strategic plan and SLNSW report advocate libraries as community spaces, corresponding with Williams’ explanation of the term ‘community’: a ‘warmly persuasive word to describe an existing set of relationships, or the warmly persuasive word to describe an alternative set of relationships’ (1976, p.66). These reports and guidelines are then translated into library services. During the interview with Librarian E, I asked her how the events program was developed. Her answer reflected the council and SLNSW goals of developing community and meeting community needs, and she explained:

> What we look for in terms of other programmes are things that one, the community would be interested in, and that fulfil the goal of... The library works under the objective of creating an enriched and connected community, so will this particular programme or event, will it enhance our community’s lifelong...

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123 The State Library design guide recommends furniture and fittings that allow for both ‘individual reading as well as collaborative, social environments’, and encourages the creation of ‘a comfortable, welcoming aesthetic’ (2012, p.81).
learning? Will it make them more connected with the community? Will they make new friends, will they have new experiences with old friends? Will they mix with people they wouldn’t normally mix with? Will it open their eyes to a new idea or a new skill or a new concept? So that lifelong learning idea. And also what’s the character of the particular community that we’re dealing with?

Her answer reveals a practical application of the principles set out in various plans and reports. The council strategic plan and the SLNSW planning tool advocates for libraries as community spaces, and Librarian E’s explanation of the event schedule at Narellan Library show how this is achieved in the everyday operations of the library. Furthermore, her comments highlight Amin’s and Fincher and Iveson’s concerns about conviviality and encounter: does the library provide opportunities to interact with friends and strangers? Interaction with friends, strangers, and people from different backgrounds and lifestyles is seen as an important activity facilitated and encouraged by the library’s programming and space.

Librarian E further highlighted the way these community goals are enacted in the library by emphasising the importance of the physical space. When asked whether the community groups that use the space for various programs and events also borrow books and read, she elaborated: ‘They come for the space. And as far as we’re concerned, we don’t mind if they read or not. Because the library is a community space, it’s not just about the books that they read.’

The ‘library as place’ objective and its role in fostering community is clear in the mission and vision of the library, which further emphasises its position within the community dispositif, as discussed earlier, and there is a focus on creating an inviting environment. As a result, the library is a large, well-lit open space with bright colours that emphasises comfort and relaxation.

There are two distinct zones within Narellan Library that highlight its attempt to create an ‘urban living room’: the newspaper and magazine area at the front of the library, and the lounge area towards the back. The creation of these spaces reflects a wider trend in libraries to accommodate more lounge spaces and informal reading areas rather than having bookshelves as the dominating feature. The magazine and newspaper area is slightly set apart from the rest of the library. In the magazine and newspaper alcove (seen in Figure 6.3) exposed brick walls, spot lighting and cushioned armchairs are intended to create a feeling of warmth and comfort.
And yet, despite the décor contributing to a more welcoming atmosphere, the library’s role as a public institution remains apparent—the presence of armchairs does not make the space a ‘living room’, merely a comfortable public space. The shelving used to display and hold magazines is designed for public use, similar to what is seen in bookshops and newsagents. The tables and chairs are durable, basic and typical of institutions like universities and schools.

Furthermore, the space is designed not only for people to gather, but also as a way that knowledge can be made transparent and information distributed (see Joyce, 2003). Figure 6.4 shows a display of council information and reinforces the status of the library as part of the local state. The library is still a municipal institution with a key role of imparting information.
A similar set-up is seen at Lane Cove Library, where community information is displayed near the entrance to the library, as seen in Figure 6.5. The notices seen in Figures 6.4 and 6.5 are mundane yet key ways that the council authority meets the individual citizen within the library’s space. These are visible examples of what Rose terms the community sector where programs and techniques are mobilised to ‘encourage and harness active practices of self-management and identity construction, of personal ethics and collective allegiances’ (Rose, 1999, p.176). Rose calls this ‘government through community’, and the library can be understood as one site where this kind of governing takes place. What is significant about these noticeboards is not only that they impart information, but rather the content of the notices themselves: they relate to a local level of life, and include development plans, environmental management plans, events by community groups, and information about local service organisations.

These notices affirm local identities and promote or facilitate self-management: the council, through the library, equips citizens to help themselves. Additionally, this is a key part of the liberal community—transparency of knowledge (Joyce, 2003). Joyce argues that the first civic public libraries in Britain created the liberal citizen ‘through the fostering of self-help and self-culture, both of which involved self-knowledge’ (2003, p.130). Importantly, the library was to
‘represent the identity of the local community’ (ibid.). In the contemporary Sydney context, this philosophy is evident. The library itself, and these displays of council notices, are technologies through which citizens connect with the local governing authority and a sense of local identity and allegiance is established.

The importance of local identity merges with the philosophy of creating comfort in Whitlam Library. A space in the foyer has been established as a lounge area (seen in Figure 6.6).
The walls in the lounge area are decorated with a map of the local area, anchoring the library within a geographical boundary. Librarian A explained the reasoning behind the design:

*We didn’t want it to be a Cabramatta library. We wanted to make it, libraries are about big picture stuff, not just your little self, here. So the concept is making the lounge not actually Cabramatta but Fairfield.*

This highlights the position of the library within the council and city—libraries are embedded within wider networks and infrastructures and they are also profoundly local, at least to the level of the LGA.

The experience of these Australian libraries as community spaces is also seen in libraries elsewhere. Mattern, in writing about Vancouver Public Library in Canada and Salt Lake City Public Library in the US, observes that in the hands of Moshe Safdie, the architect of both libraries, ‘the library becomes a convocation point, an activated public space, a mixed-use development with civic, cultural, and retail functions’ (Mattern, 2007a, p.87). In Seattle Public Library in the US, the third level is named ‘the living room’, and accommodates various uses of space. Figure 6.7 depicts this ‘living room’ level and the various ways the space and resources are
used by library patrons. Figure 6.8 highlights the way the language of ‘living room’ has become official terminology at that library and part of the official discourse; it is an idea that has taken material form. However, the space itself bears little resemblance to a private living room and instead is more the production of a living room as a spectacle; an exhibition of a living room. This leads to the question: what does it mean for the library to be perceived as a living room?

Figure 6.7 The ‘living room’ level at Seattle Public Library. Library users can be seen in the cafe on the left of the photo, studying at desk in the centre right, reading on chairs in the centre, and browsing shelves in the bottom right of the frame.
The ‘living room’ concept—and the way it operates within the community dispositif—reveals one way that the library enacts its role as a community space. Libraries present themselves as public spaces and community hubs where relationships and connections can form, and it is in this way that they contribute to social cohesion, community, and broader governmental goals of developing active citizens and governing through community. The ‘living room’ concept presents an image of the library that is non-threatening and familiar, a safe place for anyone. Librarians and library designers adopt interior design techniques to create a comfortable environment, many of which are gestural and not necessarily what one might find in a private living room.

The library is a space for members of the community to engage in their own varied activities, and sometimes the importance of the library as part of the community dispositif is less to do with third place and social capital, but rather with the provision of resources and comfort through which members of the community can become self-governing, liberal and active citizens. For many library users, there may not necessarily meaningful interactions with other library users but instead fleeting and informal encounters. The people visible in Figures 6.7 and 6.8 are for the most part involved in solitary pursuits: working on laptops with headphones in,
single reader looking at a bookshelf. These photos indicate that the library is a place in which individuals can be in public but remain in their own private bubbles. The promotion of the library as a public space for a heterogeneous group of users has a less clear connection with the creation of social capital and more clearly demonstrates the role of the library as a site for strangers and brief encounters, and as a space for community rather than (or as well as) the development of community.

**Conclusion**

In recent years, public libraries have often been spoken of as important community spaces by councils, library practitioners, and in reports and professional literatures. However, there is more complexity to the idea of the library as a community space than is discussed in these literatures, which often focus on libraries as third places and generators of social capital.

There are, certainly, points in the third place and social capital theories that are useful in examining public libraries as community spaces. In discourses around urban liveability and public life, the creation of public spaces are an important function of planners and governments, particularly in an environment with more single-occupant households and dense living. Places that are neither home nor work, where people are free to pass time, are important components of the urban landscape. The public library fits this criterion and is considered by librarians and library users alike as an institution valued as much for its provision of public space as its provision of knowledge and leisure. The notions of social capital and third place offer a framework for understanding this function of the library, a way to legitimise and perhaps measure the effectiveness of the library as a public space. Indeed, they have been used extensively in professional library literature. These are not theories that can be ignored in the discussion of the library as a community space.

However, I argue that these theories lack sufficient rigour for understanding the library as a community space. The notions of social capital and third place are often used simplistically and do not convey the more complex understandings of the term ‘community’. I suggest that the ‘community dispositif’ is a more theoretically rigorous and satisfying way of analysing the library’s position as a community hub. This approach aligns with my broader understanding of the library as a dispositif and arm of the municipal authority: ‘community’ is a key focus in many local council strategies in contemporary Sydney and Australia more broadly, in terms of fostering what may be termed ‘community spirit’ as well as how the authority interacts with its constituents. This way of
seeing the library as part of a community *dispositif* therefore aligns more closely with the governmentality framework adopted in this thesis.

In this chapter, I brought together these notions of libraries as community spaces with the work of Nikolas Rose and Patrick Joyce. I suggest that the library can be understood as one part of the community *dispositif*, one instrument through which local authorities encourage the development of a cohesive, engaged citizenry comprising of not only self-governing individuals but also members of a community.

The concept of social capital as used in professional library literatures can be seen through the lens of the community *dispositif*. Aabø and Audunson (2012) argue that libraries can be useful in maintaining bonding social capital and bridging social capital is more likely to occur through specific events and groups, and this can be seen in the libraries studied: library staff and volunteers form direct relationships with members who use the housebound library services, members of book clubs and knitting groups form friendships with each other, and libraries allow community groups to use their spaces. However, these events are not merely ways of maintaining social capital, as it is suggested in professional discourse; they are also technologies for the establishment of self-regulating communities. There are natural relations and affinities formed between members of the group as well as the individual and the library, which is part of Rose’s conception of community (1999, p.177). These services and groups offered and facilitated by the library contribute to how the library functions within a broader community *dispositif* and highlights how various theoretical understandings of community come together.

Libraries are important physical sites within the city where relationships between residents, organisations and the council are fostered, and importantly the council’s community goals become strategies that can be ticked off as library programs, events and services. The individual is seen as an active citizen who has responsibilities in the council’s community-building project. Furthermore, individual identity is no longer under strict governmental control. Rose argues that within spaces of lifestyle and culture, individuals can ‘distance themselves from the social state … They can now access a whole range of resources and techniques of subject formation in order to invent themselves, individually and collectively, as new kinds of political actors’ (Rose, 1999, p.179). The public library is one such site where individuals form allegiances and identities with their local community, highlighted in the presence of council and community notices displayed prominently in libraries.

This is a key part of the liberal community—transparency of knowledge (Joyce, 2003). Joyce argues that the first civic public libraries in Britain created the liberal citizen ‘through the
fostering of self-help and self-culture, both of which involved self-knowledge’ (2003, p.130) and the library was to ‘represent the identity of the local community’ (ibid.). In the contemporary Sydney context, this philosophy is evident. The council and community notices affirm local identities and promote or facilitate self-management: the council, through the library, equips citizens to help themselves.

The connection between the governmentality and community literature as it is exhibited in libraries was further illustrated by drawing on the ideas of Mattern and Fincher and Iveson, in relation to social infrastructure and encounter, to deepen the sense of how libraries and communities are part of governing strategies. The interactions between library users are often neither necessarily deep nor meaningful, and indeed this way of understanding community in the library might be more accurately described as the library providing the physical backdrop in which private individuals can spend time in public, together but not together. These types of interactions are, I suggest, more accurate than those purported by the social capital literature for most library users.

Importantly, the library is a site where the circuits of inclusion and exclusion meet. Rose describes the significance of various proofs of legitimate identity such as passports and driving licences: ‘each identifies the bearer with a virtual identity … whilst at the same time allowing access to various privileges’ (2000a, p.326). To become a library member (and obtain privileges such as borrowing materials), one must show proof of address and identity, and some councils require library members to reside or be employed in the LGA. However, the library’s spaces and resources are also open and accessible to non-members; anyone can read a book off the shelf, read in a seat, or use the desks, including those who are on the margins of society such as the homeless (see chapter four). The library through its community building projects may also actively recruit and support disadvantaged people in the community, for example through programs like ‘Finding My Place’. Councils cannot order individuals to become active members of the community, but they can encourage them to engage with the council and each other through the provision of welcoming public spaces and targeted programs. The library is not only one of the technologies of government; it is also one of the spaces for government, both roles which are achieved through its community function.
Chapter 7
Organising reading

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I explored the way the library brings people together—the positioning of the library as a public, inclusive community space. In this chapter, I consider the way the library separates its users. The library continues to be understood as a dispositif and an instrument by which a community or population is regulated, and here I focus on the way readers and reading are organised. Broadly, the library plays a role in encouraging reading, literacy and learning amongst the general population. Understanding the library as a dispositif and an instrument of liberal governmentality operates at this level of generality, as I have argued throughout this thesis. In this final chapter, I take a closer look at the reader in the library.

Specifically, I examine the library as a site where the reproduction of class values occurs. The theory of cultural capital suggests that institutions of literature are mechanisms through which people sort themselves in categories of cultural competence through reading and other cultural practices. The self-sorting that occurs within the library is not undertaken by a completely free and autonomous self but instead is restricted by a set of possibilities in the library dispositif. I explore the distribution of classes and cultural competencies across different library systems, and the ways that relationships between reading, taste and cultural capital operate. I offer a rereading of Bourdieu’s work, drawing on the dispositif and liberal governmentality perspectives developed earlier in the thesis, looking at what kinds of people are reading what kinds of books, and how their reading decisions are made within the context of a field of literary production.

The chapter opens with a broad discussion on the inculcation of reading in the library, highlighting the governmental role of the library. Then, I briefly overview the theoretical concepts structuring this chapter and consider how the library fits within them. Next, I explore the library’s position at the juncture of various forces that bear on reading practices: governmental forces, literary production and literary consumption. The remainder of the chapter focuses on the individual. Drawing on the theoretical literature relating to reading, class and culture (Bennett et al., 1999, 2001, 2009; Ray, 2001), I examine readers and their reading tastes across the three case study libraries.
7.1 The inculcation of reading in the library

There is a governmental goal in the way libraries approach reading and literacy. In chapter five, I examined the ways that library collections are built and libraries encourage reading through the provision of books. In this section, I review the overt ways libraries encourage reading. First is the provision of materials for literacy. Promoting and providing resources for literacy is a central function of public libraries, and many libraries provide for adult literacy in their collections to encourage and enable lifelong-learning, such as the collection at Narellan Library, seen in Figure 7.1. The promotion of literacy is also seen at Lane Cove and Whitlam Libraries, as discussed in chapter five.

Figure 7.1 The adult literacy collection at Narellan Library

While this is undoubtedly an important element of the library as an institution for reading, other programs also contribute to the inculcation of reading in libraries and highlight the governmental aspect of public libraries. Additionally, the public library plays an important role in advancing digital literacy—like its more established role in promoting reading and literacy, the
library now provides tools and resources to equip its users navigate a new digital environment.\(^\text{124}\) The task of equipping library users with skills for lifelong learning, literacy, and the ability for self-improvement has not ended in this new digital environment but rather it has changed. Classes and workshops in public libraries such as computer classes for elderly users, workshops on using various electronic devices, and training sessions on a range of topics such as the benefits and uses of broadband internet\(^\text{125}\), cyber-safety\(^\text{126}\) and how to use image editing software illustrate the myriad of ways that libraries support and enhance digital literacy.

A second method for encouraging reading seen in libraries is the presence of promotional programs developed by the book industry. The year 2012 was branded by the Australian book community as the ‘National Year of Reading’ (NYR), an initiative founded by fifteen library partners including State Libraries across the country, the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA), and various public library associations to address declining levels of literacy in Australia (love2read, n.d.).

The program received funding from the Australian Government through its Office for the Arts and ran various events to promote reading. Participants included 1494 public libraries across Australia, booksellers, publishers, schools, politicians, community organisations and local ambassadors (love2read, n.d.). The official launch occurred at the National Library of Australia in Canberra and was attended by the Prime Minister, the Arts Minister, and the School Education Minister, as well as various Federal Senators and Members of Parliament (love2read n.d.). The campaign involved branding and promotional material as well as events and a travelling exhibition of the official NYR book, *Are We There Yet?* by Alison Lester\(^\text{127}\).

\(^{124}\) The National and State Libraries Australasia (NSLA) is hosting a conference in 2016 titled ‘Linked up, Loud and Literate: Libraries enabling digital citizenship’, which explores the role of libraries in developing digital citizenship (National and State Libraries Australasia, n.d.). This indicates a shift in mentality from all types of libraries: it is no longer sufficient to provide internet access, but libraries also play an important role in supporting digital literacy and digital citizenship.

\(^{125}\) Digital Hubs were an Australian Government initiative to educate the population about broadband internet and the National Broadband Network (NBN), and were established in various community venues around the country from 2012. Around half of the digital hubs opened were in public libraries (Hudson, 2014; *INCIIE*, 2013; Rolan et al., 2014).

\(^{126}\) There have been various programs across Australian public libraries aimed improving awareness about cyber-safety, such as Cybersmart (Croome, 2011; Trotter, 2009) and eSmart Libraries (Slocombe, 2013; The Alannah and Madeline Foundation, n.d.)

\(^{127}\) After the NYR ended, the ‘love2read’ component of the campaign continued into 2013 and remains as a ‘a collaborative project joining public libraries, government, community groups, media and commercial partners, and of course the public’ (love2read, n.d.).
A similar promotional campaign is the ‘Get Reading!’ initiative which developed from the ‘Books Alive’ campaign, an Australian Government program promoting reading and literacy (Australia Council for the Arts, n.d.; Get Reading!, 2013). These campaigns illustrate the library’s governmental role and the state influence on its activities: the promotion of reading and literacy is a goal of the state, and the implementation of these campaigns occurs through various institutions, including public libraries.128

A third strategy used in advocating reading and related to these campaigns is the arrangement of mass reading events, organised reading activities that unite a large audience (Fuller and Rehberg Sedo, 2013). National Simultaneous Storytime (NSS) is an annual event organised by ALIA, where an Australian picture book is read simultaneously in libraries, preschools, schools, childcare centres and bookshops around the country (Australian Library and Information Association, n.d.). The event promotes reading and literacy, the joy of books, Australian authors and illustrators, storytime activities in public libraries, and social reading for families. NSS began in 2001 and often involves local celebrities and politicians making appearances in libraries. The non-commercial nature of NSS is highlighted by the fact that the organisation behind it is ALIA, an association of library professionals.

Another mass reading event in Australia that aims to promote literacy and reading grew out of Parkes, in regional NSW. Started in 1996 by the principal of Parkes Public School, Paint the Town REaD is an organisation that works with local government agencies to promote early childhood literacy. It supports organisations to form reading groups and events to encourage communities to read, sing, and rhyme with children to prepare them for learning how to read and write as they enter school (Paint the Town REaD, n.d.). Emerging from this idea, Parkes also hosts REaDtember, a literacy project programmed and delivered by Parkes Shire Library that began in 2011. It uses storytelling and literacy events to engage young people and local community groups runs, and through September, October and November (Mauro, 2015).

A more explicitly governmental mass reading event supported by libraries is the NSW Premier’s Reading Challenge, a NSW Government program that encourages school students

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128 However, funding for literacy campaigns depends on individual governments and support of literacy institutions can be inconsistent: the newly-elected Australian Government in 2013 cut funding to the ‘Get Reading!’ campaign in its first budget in 2014 (Jericho, 2014; Westwood, 2014). While the library—as an instrument of the state—operates alongside other governmental and non-state actors in the inculcation of reading, it would be incorrect to assert that all levels and arms of government support and promote reading and literacy to the same extent as the library.
from Kindergarten to Year 9\textsuperscript{129} to read more often and more widely (Department of Education and Communities, 2013a). The challenge involves students reading books from lists designed for their year group, and they receive a certificate and are listed in an Honour Roll for their participation.

Although this is a government initiative, there are commercial partners: in 2015, the principal partner is Dymocks Children’s Charities, the ‘technology partner’ is Microsoft, and the ‘innovation partner’ is Accenture and Avanade (Department of Education and Communities, 2013b). The governing forces that encourage or inculcate reading in the general population are not all part of the state; the promotion of reading and literacy is a goal shared by the state, charitable organisations and private companies. Importantly, this is supported by and promoted in public libraries. Figure 7.2 shows a display of books promoted as part of the NSW Premier’s Reading Challenge in Narellan Library (similar displays were also seen at the other two libraries).

\textit{Figure 7.2} The shelf of Premier’s Reading Challenge books at Narellan Library visible in the left and centre of the photo is located in the children’s and youth section of the building

\textsuperscript{129} These are students aged from around five to fourteen.
A fourth and more informal strategy used by libraries to instil a reading habit is hosting reading clubs and competitions. At Whitlam Library, two different reading competitions occur, with one focusing on children struggling with English literacy. Family literacy classes run at the library and are designed for children in Years 2 to 6 who have identified problems with reading and writing. In 2012, as part of the NYR, one of the family literacy tutors ran a reading competition where the children were given a small booklet to record the books they read and write short reviews of them. Librarian A reported that these booklets 'encouraged the kids to be reading as many books as they could through the course of the term. And both of the groups read hundreds of books.'

Many public libraries also participate in the Summer Reading Club, a program organised by love2read, the Australian Public Library Alliance, ALIA, the State Library of Queensland, and the Queensland Government (Summer Reading Club, 2015). Libraries register to participate in the program, which allows children up to 15 years of age to collect a ‘Summer Reading Club’ kit, record all books read on the log sheet provided, and receive prizes based on the number of books read.

These various programs, events and promotions are all components of the library dispositif that highlight the status of the library as a governmental device: it is not simply a passive provider of books, but it actively promotes reading in multiple ways. Furthermore, the library is part of a network of agencies and actors that all share a similar goal of encouraging reading. The discussion so far on reading and the library has focused on the provision for and encouragement of reading by the library and other agents; my attention in the next section turns to those the library is attempting to influence: the readers themselves.

7.2 Habitus, field, cultural capital and taste

In examining the library as a reading institution, encouraging reading is only one role assumed by the library. This is a direct and clear role, but there is a more complex element too. This chapter’s title ‘Organising Reading’ refers not only to the way library collections and reading promotions

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130 Students who participate in the program need to provide evidence for their literacy problems from their school such as term reports.

131 All three case study libraries are participating in the Summer Reading Club over the 2015-2016 summer.
are organised but also the role of library as a site in which readers organise themselves. This organisation occurs in relations between social positions, and the different ways of framing and organising reading emerge from the connections between schools, libraries, publishers and state reading programs. Before I begin the analysis of the library’s position within a network of reading institutions and explore the organisation of readers in the library, I outline the theoretical framework upon which this discussion is built.

Habitus is an important concept in discussing the types of people who use libraries and the kinds of books they read, as it can illuminate the links between readers, their backgrounds and their tastes. Bourdieu (1984, 2005) theorises habitus as a system of dispositions: long-lasting ways of being, acting and seeing that contribute to a particular style or lifestyle. It is a way of perceiving the world that is internalised and embodied at a young age. Furthermore, habitus shapes and is shaped by social practices, what Bourdieu refers to as ‘structuring structures’ (Bourdieu, 1990; Dovey, 2005). Habitus explains why people from similar social backgrounds will have in common elements of their behaviour and attitudes.

Importantly, habitus is not natural or inherent; it is acquired and thus can be changed. Bourdieu asserts, ‘Dispositions are long-lasting: they tend to perpetuate, to reproduce themselves, but they are not eternal’ (Bourdieu, 2005, p.45). This point that habitus is impermanent and changeable is pertinent in this discussion of what people read, and why they read what they read. People from different class, racial and gender backgrounds will have been exposed to different types of literature and reading material, and upbringing and education may lead to certain dispositions and preferences in terms of reading habits and tastes. Yet dispositions, as Bourdieu argues, are not destiny: people are free to re-position themselves on a social hierarchy and deviate from what is expected. This is a particularly pertinent point as library users are individuals free to make their own reading choices, without curricula or prescribed reading lists. Their tastes and reading habits are reflections of who they are or aspire to be.

The concept of the habitus can be illustrated by looking at reading as a cultural practice and how readers engage with texts. Lyons argues that ‘readers do not come to a text empty-handed, but bring to it a product of a life-long cultural formation, deep-rooted mentalities of a culture or class’ (1992, p.8). This idea that readers take part in producing a text’s meaning is echoed by Chartier. He states that there exists a relationship between book, text, and reader, noting that once a book is published, the author gives up control and is no longer the ‘unique master of the meaning of the text’ (1994, p.28). This links closely with habitus. Habitus affects
modes of learning, acquisition of knowledge and, importantly, the ways books and texts are read. Readers bring to the text their own experiences and dispositions to create meaning.

Closely related to habitus is the literary field. This is a symbolic space wherein actors produce, disseminate, evaluate and legitimise literary products. The literary field refers to a structured space in which various agents and institutions are positioned, and these occupy various roles in the division of labour in relation to the production of cultural goods (Bourdieu, 1985, 1993c, 1993a; Johnson, 1993). The structure of the field is determined by the relations between these agents and institutions, and is a site in which struggles occur over the evaluation of practices and works. Bourdieu expands on his conception of the field:

The structure of the field, i.e. of the space of positions, is nothing other than the structure of the distribution of capital of specific properties which governs success in the field and the winning of the external or specific profits (such as literary prestige) which are at stake in the field. (Bourdieu, 1993c, p.30)

Furthermore, a key feature of the field is its autonomy:

A field is a separate social universe having its own laws of functioning independent of those of politics and the economy. The existence of the writer, as fact and as value, is inseparable from the existence of the literary field as an autonomous universe endowed with specific principles of evaluation of practices and works. (Bourdieu, 1993a, pp.162–163)

Bourdieu’s description of the literary field as the ‘economic world reversed’ highlights the autonomy of the literary field. Success in this field is not necessarily measured in economic terms; at certain positions on the field, value is not measured by commercial success since ‘art for art’s sake’ is not made for consumption. He characterises this as a struggle between two principles of hierarchisation—a struggle between those who dominate the field economically and politically, and those who exhibit independence from the economy (Bourdieu, 1993c, 1996).
Importantly, this is a struggle over legitimacy: what is the legitimate definition of art and literature, and who has the authority to determine this legitimacy?

Despite the autonomy of the field and Bourdieu’s characterisation of the field as its own social universe—where rules of legitimacy do not necessarily correspond with economic or political value—he recognises that the field is also located in time and space. The theory of field and habitus considers the economic, political and social context in which a field is positioned. It is this point about the importance of social and economic contexts that is pertinent to another framework regarding the social universe of literature and reading—the reading industry.

The ‘reading industry’, a term coined by Fuller and Rehberg Sedo (2013), is a concept that emerges from the literary field and adjusts it for a new temporal context. They suggest that ‘twenty-first century popular literary culture and contemporary practices of leisure reading are not easily locatable within one field of production or consumption’ (Fuller and Rehberg Sedo, 2013, p.16), adding that ‘increasingly, fields of cultural production intersect’ (ibid.). An example they offer to illustrate this intersection is The Reader, a 1995 novel by Bernard Schlink that was adapted into a film in 2008. The film was marketed as an arts-house film, typically located within the field of restricted production, but achieved considerable market success. This film not only illustrates how the lines between the field of restricted production and the field of large-scale cultural production can blur, but also how two separate cultural spheres like film and literature can merge.

132 In this struggle over legitimacy in the field of cultural production, Bourdieu (1993c) observes there are three competing principles: the specific principle of legitimacy (recognition granted to producers by other producers in an autonomous world where art is produced for art’s sake); legitimacy that corresponds to the tastes of the dominant classes and consecrated by public or private institutions; and legitimacy linked to the ‘popular’, where consecration comes from acceptance from a mass audience. This is related to his division of the field of cultural production into two sectors: the field of restricted production, where producers produce goods for other producers, and the field of large-scale cultural production, where goods have relatively little symbolic value and there is a greater market-based imperative (Bourdieu, 1985).

133 One common way of bestowing legitimacy on cultural goods is the prize. The role of prizes in determining cultural legitimacy is examined by English (2002, 2005), and he suggests that capital exists not just in one field but between fields, and cultural prizes are an effective instrument for capital intraconversion—‘negotiating transactions between cultural and economic, cultural and social, or cultural and political capital’ (English, 2005, p.10). Similarly, Todd (1996) analysed the position of fiction within the cultural landscape in Britain in the 1980s and 1990s. He examined prize culture in that period and observed that prizes became an important mechanism in evaluating literary legitimacy. They also had a profound commercial impact and effect on how fiction was consumed.

134 This notion closely resembles Carter’s understanding of ‘book culture’ (2006). Both concepts refer to institutions, practices and values related to books and reading, including publishers, bookshops, libraries, reviewers and readers.

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As a result of these intersections and overlaps, new boundaries around these fields of production need to be drawn, but these lines are not necessarily distinct. Fuller and Rehberg Sedo, recounting Wright’s (2007) discussion of the British television broadcast The Big Read and the contemporary literary field, observe:

Far more agents are hustling for profit and shaping notions of cultural value within the field of contemporary English-language literary production than Bourdieu could envisage given his own temporal and geographic location … Production companies, media giants such as Oprah Winfrey, and even nationally recognized television personalities, from gardeners to cooks, are able to wield ‘metacapital’ (symbolic capital accrued in non-literary fields) that mediates positions and the organization of social space in the literary field. (Fuller and Rehberg Sedo, 2013, p.17)

This emphasises the differences between contemporary literature and the context in which Bourdieu developed his theory of the field of cultural production, and Fuller and Rehberg Sedo present the reading industry as an alternative framework that accounts for the new agents and institutions involved in the contemporary field of literary production.

The reading industry, therefore, refers to the organisations, institutions and businesses that produce literary artefacts such as books, mass reading events and film adaptations of books. Fuller and Rehberg Sedo explain their use of the term ‘industry’: “Industry’ connotes the production of material goods for profit, large-scale manufacture, and the presence of a market’ (2013, p.17). In this new configuration of the literary field, market forces and private enterprises are more significant.

Despite the market-focused connotations of the term ‘reading industry’, it includes not-for-profit actors such as public library systems. Fuller and Rehberg Sedo state that the reading industry’s primary product is not books, but the

[Artifects, programming, events, and literary adaptations that represent books (both fiction and non-fiction). The ‘market’ or target audience for these products, are ordinary, or, nonprofessional, readers. (Fuller and Rehberg Sedo, 2013, p.18)

This addresses the same range of agents but with a stronger division between the fields of extended and restricted fields of literary production as Bourdieu proposed.
The way that ‘field’ has been critically engaged with in the discussion so far has related to a production perspective and focused on actors such as publishers, literary agents and film producers. Another way of engaging with the concept of field is through the lens of consumption and reading practices. Long (2003) uses the term the ‘social infrastructure of reading’ to refer to two distinct elements: how reading is taught and sustained. Long observes that reading is a learnt skill and argues that reading occurs within specific social relationships, such as parents teaching their children: ‘familial reading is both a form of cultural capital and one of the most important determinants of adherence to reading in later life’ (Long, 2003, p.9).

However, the social settings in which reading skills are learnt are not the only parts of the social infrastructure of reading; further support is required for reading to be sustained as a regular practice. Long contends that social and technological infrastructure is required to sustain a literary culture, reporting:

Articles on book distribution and marketing, reading instruction in nineteenth century schoolrooms, book serialization in newspapers, the growth of the library system, censorship, and copyright laws and intellectual property disputes … make it clear how complex the institutional support for individual reading has come to be. (Long, 2003, p.11)

Long highlights the social and cultural settings that make texts available to be read, observing that there are groups of people and institutional processes privileging particular kinds of reading material over others and promoting certain ways of reading. These ways of learning to read, and the systems that are in place to ensure the continuation of reading as a practice, contribute to the social infrastructure of reading (a concept that has overlaps with both the literary field and the reading industry). These infrastructures include not only family instructions and formal schooling but also organisations such as book clubs (Long, 2003; Lyons, 1999).

An important concept related to these ideas is cultural capital. Legitimacy, prestige and authority, and the possession of cultural capital are significant factors in positioning oneself within the literary field. Cultural capital refers to the knowledges, skills, and competencies of legitimate cultural codes which are acquired through upbringing and education (Bourdieu, 1984, 1993b; see also Dovey, 2005). Bourdieu theorised that possession of cultural capital was related to academic success, and the inequality in ‘scholastic achievement’ was linked to ‘the distribution of cultural capital between the classes and class factions’ (Bourdieu, 1986, p.243). He argued that
success was not necessarily only about natural aptitude, or indeed even economic investment, but rather the possession and domestic transmission of cultural capital. Importantly, there is a clear link between cultural hierarchies and social and economic hierarchies, which then ‘produce a complex relationship between the kind of person one is or is likely to become and one’s tastes for music, reading and the arts’ (Wright, 2006, p.124). Social class, upbringing, and education can have significant influences on one’s knowledge and consumption of cultural goods.

Specifically related to reading, books and literature constitute a cultural field of their own, with its own hierarchies and required competencies. Fuller and Rehberg Sedo observe that for some readers who participate in reading events, ‘possessing the competencies to read books and to talk critically about them is a valued skill and can be understood as a form of cultural capital’ (2013, p.25). This is a step beyond having a level of literacy and proficiency in reading which, as Ross (2006) argues, is what turns people in readers. Literacy, in this context, is distinct from notions of cultural competencies in reading, and refers more to knowledge of and participation in literary culture.

A related idea to the expression of cultural capital and reading competencies by consumers of cultural goods is taste. In the context of this discussion, taste refers to preferences in things such as dress, music, sport, literature and art. Bourdieu remarks:

Taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier. Social subjects, classified by their classifications, distinguish themselves by the distinctions they make, between the beautiful and the ugly, the distinguished and the vulgar, in which their position in the objective classifications is expressed or betrayed. (Bourdieu, 1984, p.xxix)

He further states that tastes are an affirmation of difference, and suggests that when they have to be justified, they are often expressed negatively—taste for one thing is simultaneously dis-taste for another. Similarly, Hawkins suggests:

Kitsch, common, ostentatious, and lowbrow taste are more likely to be used when describing an absence of good taste. These terms imply an inability to display distinction and refinement, a preference for the mass, the crass, and the mindless. (Hawkins, 2005, p.340)
Taste, and the differences in cultural consumption that occur as a result, legitimate and illuminate social difference. Taste is influenced by habitus and cultural capital, and it has an orienting purpose, ‘guiding the occupants of a given place in social space towards the social positions adjusted to their properties and towards the practices or goods which befit the occupants of that position’ (Bourdieu, 1984, pp.468–469). Tastes, which are often expressed as profoundly individual (seen in statements such as ‘I like to read…’ or ‘My favourite authors are…’), are products of social differences and hierarchies, a device that classifies the classifier.

7.3 Culture, libraries, and the dispositif

The discussion so far has been decidedly Bourdieusian in focus and, certainly, Bourdieu’s theories are a crucial component in the framework of this discussion on reading and taste. In this section, I consider how the concepts of habitus, cultural capital and taste might fit within a framework of the library as a dispositif. Bennett (2010) suggests that while the two theoretical approaches have points where they clash, they can be used complementarily. Bennett contends that Foucault’s work on sexuality, technologies of self and technologies of power ‘opened up questions concerning the mechanisms through which different forms of personhood are shaped’ that contrast with habitus (Bennett, 2010, p.105). He suggests that the closest point of entry for a Foucauldian analysis of culture is:

[V]ia the means it offers for examining the roles played by varied forms of cultural knowledge and expertise in organising a dispersed and differentiated set of power relations which act on the social in varied ways. (Bennett, 2010, p.106)

Culture thus becomes a governing device, and the governmentality framework offers a way of understanding the different ways cultural competencies can be used to organise populations. Earlier, I discussed the use of culture and literature as a governing instrument and the importance of this principle in the development of the modern public library (chapter one; see also Bennett, 2008; Carey, 2005; Rose, 2010).

In a similar vein, Ray recounts Fichte’s argument that an ideal society would be concerned with the welfare of all its citizens, and that these unique citizens occupy different economic and social positions with correspondingly different needs (Fichte in Ray, 2001). Culture is a mechanism through which citizens can become self-regulating and self-sorting,
though Ray points out that in this sense, ‘culture’ does not refer to aesthetic capital but rather ‘the universal imperative to ‘make something of oneself’, as well as the institutions and processes that disseminate that law and enable its enactment’ (2001, p.77). These institutions and processes included museums, theatres, libraries, learned societies, public gardens, and national achievements—bodies and spaces typically associated with ‘legitimate’ culture and its circulation.

As a dispositif, the library is an assembly of heterogeneous apparatuses that encourage particular behaviours. These can be material and specific, such as the types of furniture used, how space is arranged, and policies regarding library use and codes of conduct. In chapter four, where I explored the idea of the library as an oligopticon where users could self-monitor and self-regulate, the material space of the library was an important component. Here, a more symbolic component is at play. Culture is seen as a device which self-regulating users can use in a different way—by sorting themselves into different classes or groups and thereby establishing a different kind of order.

Culture, argues Ray (2001), both marks beliefs shared with others in a society or community and provides points of distinction, self-identity and individuality. He suggests that in revolutionary France in the eighteenth century, a new class of elite emerged: the intellectuals and social managers, which replaced the clergy and nobility. The emergence of this new class came with new concerns regarding the way society would be organised. Importantly, there was a question of whether the new social system was accessible and self-regulating:

The general deployment of analytic critique was intended to create a cohesive and coherent society, it was not expected to create a homogeneous one. On the contrary, it was assumed that the process of self-realization would be literal: people would realize their inclinations and abilities, and seek their place in society on their own. (Ray, 2001, p.76)

Different classes and levels of cultural capital thereby operate as a sorting mechanism. Furthermore, Ray suggests that forms of mass media and popular culture function in a similar way to the traditional hierarchy of cultural capital and institutions associated with legitimate culture. Mass media appeals to various groups divided by, for example, taste, class, or political ideologies and ‘they encourage people to sort themselves into categories and classes on the basis of their tastes and types of response’ (Ray, 2001, p.170). Similarly, Ang on viewers of the soap opera *Dallas* and the ideology of mass culture, suggests ‘Ideologies organize not on the ideas and
images people make of reality, they also enable people to form an image of themselves and thus to occupy a position in the world’ (1982, p.102). Through cultural tastes, whether through watching soap operas or reading novels, individuals can acquire identities.

This has an important implication for governing: self-classification sorts the social body, as the liberal subject can place her or himself into a particular group or class. Ray (2001) explains that this has certain advantages for the state and society: it achieves a uniformity of disposition without coercive intervention; it has an economic effect through the continual production and exchange of value that involves everyone; and it leads to a wider range of people forming their own laws and norms in the construction of these identities and sub-cultures or sub-communities.

The discussion so far relates to culture in a broad sense, and my attention turns now to one specific cultural activity: reading. Reading is a cultural activity that is often seen as higher in value than other cultural activities (Bennett et al., 1999)—though there are clear hierarchies within reading itself related to the kinds of material read.

Material such as poetry, canonical works, and contemporary literary novels are conventionally elevated above popular fiction and genres such as romance and thrillers (see chapter five). Long argues that reading is a socially framed act, where groups of people (such as critics and publishers) and institutional processes (such as censorship) ‘shape reading practices by authoritatively defining what is worth reading and how to read it’ (2003, p.11). Wright observes that in relation to reading, there are concerns not just with whether people are reading, but also with ‘whether the types of reading they are engaged in are ‘correct’ or somehow wasteful or corrosive’ (2006, p.125).

However, even ‘lesser’ forms of literature can play a governing and instructional role. In writing specifically about the novel, Ray (2001) argues that it fuses society and the individual by utilising contemporary social settings and focusing on individual characters (often with a first person narrator), and this enables the novel to become a moral instrument that helps readers learn tacit social codes and become more self-aware. He suggests that:

[The novel is a particularly effective instrument of social cohesion precisely because of its ability to mobilize a broad spectrum of responses and thus to address a public of varying capacities and interests. (Ray, 2001, p.86)
Novels provide an opportunity for individuals to understand and imagine the society in which they live (including its norms and values), and to see the world through social values and categories.

Literature and reading can therefore perform governing functions in multiple ways, and the library is an important site that both accommodates and facilitates this. The self-sorting and self-regulating practices undertaken by library users take place in an already ordered set of possibilities produced by various institutions, including the library. The library caters to different tastes and proclivities, becoming a site where individuals are free to sort and re-sort themselves into groups, both affirming and rebelling against their social positions, with limitations—in terms of sorting themselves by reading taste, library users are bound by what is available in the library collection; these are not infinite possibilities. And there can be tensions in the way people are ordered, where tastes and reading habits do not fit the theoretical models—ordering practices are never complete or total.

7.4 The library positioned within contemporary reading infrastructures

The public library is not a closed system; it can act as a dispositif that accommodates and promotes all kinds of reading because it is situated within a wider network of agents in the literary field. The library is a connecting hub acting as an assembly point for three forces that bear on reading practices and constitute reading infrastructures: governmental forces, as I noted at the start of this chapter, but also the two fields of literary production and literary consumption. It is a unique site in which these forces come together and, importantly, a place where acts of everyday reading by the general public occur.

In the literary field of production, the library is one apparatus—within a broader hierarchy of libraries, as I discussed in the introduction—that distributes literary goods and possesses some authority to discern literary value. They can be a producer of literary goods, such as Lane Cove Library publishing local history monographs and collections of works from their writers-in-residence groups, or, more commonly, they act as institutions that store and distribute

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135 This section primarily focuses on the library within the broader book industry, but it is also a fundamental part of a related industry, the library industry. This 'library universe' comprises libraries of all types, professional institutions, and specialist commercial organisations that deal with libraries such as library suppliers (for books), library furniture vendors, and other specialist equipment or stationery organisations (see chapter five).
literary goods, connecting literary materials with audiences. Moreover, libraries play a role in sustaining literary practices by inculcating reading and being part of the public education nexus that supports reading and literacy. They operate alongside institutions such as museums and art galleries to form a social apparatus that sustain the symbolic power of the field (Johnson, 1993).

Literary consumption and reading is another area where libraries act as a key site. As I indicated in the discussion earlier on mass reading events in Australia, libraries often host reading events (both mass reading events and smaller ones). In the UK, public libraries were ‘a primary focus of activity for The Big Read’, a BBC initiative that utilised multiple media platforms, including a TV program, to poll the nation’s reading tastes and favourite books (Wright, 2007, p.17). In the US, public libraries were the birthplace of citywide reading events such as One Book One City (Collins, 2010; Fuller and Rehberg Sedo, 2013) and public librarians were seen as figures of literary authority. These events were organised by commercial and non-commercial organisations136, highlighting the ever-more blurry lines between commerce and culture as it relates to reading practices.

The commercial element of reading is further highlighted when considering the relationship between the library and the bookshop. Out of the various agents and institutions that constitute the literary field, the closest to the library in terms of function and relationship is the bookshop. Because the library is more closely connected with specialist library suppliers, its relationships with publishers, authors and agents are typically limited, generally restricted to the organisation of author events. Furthermore, while public libraries do promote and collect books that receive critical reviews and win literary prizes, there is no other direct or close link with those agents of legitimacy. Their relationships with bookshops, however, tend to be closer. As discussed in chapter five, for many libraries, bookshops are one small source of books for their collections. Bookshops also tend to work with libraries during author events; a common scenario is a local bookshop having a presence at a library author event, selling the author’s books.

The position of the library as one node in a city’s broader reading infrastructure is exemplified by readers’ use of bookshops and libraries. They are both sources of books for reader, and while bookshops and libraries might not deal with each other frequently on an

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136 In the UK, Transworld publishers works with the Reading Agency on Big City Read in Birmingham, highlighting how ‘the promotion of reading as a public good has been handed over to private agencies by the central government’ (Fuller and Rehberg Sedo, 2013, p.6).
everyday basis, the reader serves as a bridge between the two, where books first seen in a bookshop might then be borrowed at a library, or books initially borrowed from the library may later be bought from a bookshop. Out of the thirty library users interviewed in this research, only four reported not buying books. Most users sourced books from a combination of libraries, bookshops, secondhand shops, online retailers (particularly for e-books), department stores (including discount department stores like Big W, Kmart and Target), and borrowing from friends and acquaintances.

Additionally, the decisions users make regarding how they select books and where they obtain their books reveal some important points regarding the marketing of books and reading, and how the library can be a site with commercial influences despite not being profit-driven enterprises themselves. The similarities between bookshops and libraries are further highlighted by the display of books. Book displays and book covers in both bookshops and libraries are influential in enticing potential readers. Claudia recounted how she came to discover one author’s work:

*I started reading one author’s books because I came in, and they had a – had the display here. And the cover of the book, it was called um, One [Day] in May or something, and the cover was just really beautiful. ... And so I borrowed the book, really enjoyed it, and then came back to the library ... I read all of her books because the cover was appealing.*

Claudia’s comment highlights the importance of packaging and display of books. Despite the position of the book as a cultural product—and some agents in the literary field of consumption perceive it to be more than just a commodity distinct from a loaf of bread or bottle of milk\textsuperscript{137}—both libraries and bookshops are invested in the business of ‘selling’ books, and marketing strategies are important in attracting readers.

The choice readers make between buying or borrowing books reveal the importance of book displays and marketing, with some users saying their decision to buy or borrow simply

\textsuperscript{137} Miller’s *The Reluctant Capitalists* (2006) examines these issues as she looks at changes in bookselling in the US, and particularly at the shifting role of independent booksellers as they move from cultural gatekeepers who carefully curated ‘worthy’ booklists to businesses driven by a commercial and economic imperative.
depends on where they were when they discovered the book they wanted to read, such as Charles:

I will buy a book if I’m in a bookshop. I will borrow a book if I’m in a library. It’s as easy as that. … I think of it as fate. If I see it there, and I want to read it, it comes to me, I should get it.

For other users, there is a clearer line drawn in the buy/borrow decision. When I asked Laura if there was a difference between the books that she bought and the books that she borrowed, she replied:

I’d be more willing to just borrow trashy stuff, that I wouldn’t want to be seen buying (this is so shocking!) It probably is that. Because if you see my unit, we have a lot of bookshelves along a row. It sounds shitty, but I don’t want some trashy chick-lit thing to be wrecking my shelf. I’ll just go and borrow it, it’s like no one even knows.

Laura, a highly educated professional, declared, ‘For me, if I don’t read literary fiction each day, then I feel like it’s a waste of a day.’ She is an avid reader and both buys and borrows books, across a range of genres and subject areas. Her comment about being more inclined to borrow ‘trashy stuff’ reveals the library as a site where novels can be borrowed without financial or image consequences. Laura’s use of the library for borrowing ‘trashy’ genre fiction indicates that libraries, despite not selling books or having profit-making objectives, are still deeply involved in the market-driven aspects of books and reading.

This section on the buying versus borrowing decision has offered a glimpse of the individual reader in the library. In the remainder of this chapter, my focus stays on the individual and I look more closely at their reading lives from this perspective of cultural capital theory. The discussion so far has been quite general, and in the remainder of this chapter, I examine the reading lives of individual readers in the library. As mentioned in chapter two, interviews were

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138 Miller (2011) examines the precarious state of book retailing in the twenty-first-century in the US. The bankruptcy and closure Borders, which accounted for eight per cent of total book sales in the US at the point of its bankruptcy and in some areas was the only available bookshop, there was a profound impact on the book retailing landscape. As the book retailing sector faces increased competition (particularly from online retailers and e-books) and instability, and the physical outlets where books can be bought decrease, the importance of the library as a source of books may increase.
conducted with library users as well as librarians. This was necessary for three reasons. First, only interviewing librarians would over-represent the library institution and over-determine the power of librarians in inculcating reading. Second, reading tastes are deep, complex and individual, developed over lifetimes with multiple and varied influences. The complexity in influences on and development of reading tastes was best investigated through interviewing readers about their own reading tastes, lives and histories. Third, and finally, this research is not only about the construction of the library as a reading space, but also about its use. The status of the library as part of the city’s reading infrastructure is not attained only by its position in the field of literary production but also in the field of literary consumption. A key aspect of this research is the role of the library as a public, everyday space in which quotidian acts of reading occur or are made possible. Therefore, the idea of the reader in the library warranted closer examination.

7.5 The reading lives of library users

The narrative presented in this thesis and chapter thus far has been about order, structures and organisations, but now the spotlight turns to the individual. In the remainder of this chapter, I explore the reading tastes of some library users to examine the links between class, education and reading. My aim was not to ‘test’ the theory of cultural capital. Rather, I use it as a framework for understanding the reading lives and stories of the participants, and explore their ways of selecting reading material, what they enjoyed reading, how they read, and why they read what they did.

There is a difference in reading habits between genders. Of the fourteen male users interviewed, seven (50 per cent) did not read fiction, as seen in the tables in Appendix H. By contrast, only one out of sixteen female users did not read fiction (6.25 per cent). Indeed, two out of the sixteen female users (12.5 per cent) read only fiction and did not read non-fiction. This is consistent with Bennett et al.’s (1999) finding from their 1990s research on Australian cultural consumption patterns that men have greater interest in factual and documentary reading while women express a greater preference for literary or aesthetic types of reading. A distinction was made by several users about reading to be informed versus reading to be entertained. While participants of both genders read both for entertainment and information, five male users listed learning and information as their main reasons for reading, whereas only one female user did so. Enjoyment, pleasure and escape were more commonly listed by female library users.

Education and class are other important influences on the types of reading material people preferred and their possession of cultural capital. Bennett et al. (1999) observe that there
are links between education levels and reading as a regular activity—around three quarters of people with tertiary qualifications surveyed read often, compared with half who had at least some secondary education\(^{139}\). In terms of genre preferences, people who completed only secondary school are more likely to read romance, and those who completed tertiary education tend to have a greater preference for aesthetic and intellectual genres. Similarly, social class is associated with reading preferences. Professionals exhibited the strongest preferences for high literary genres, while managers and supervisors were most strongly associated with the highest-status genres of popular fiction (crime and science fiction). Sales and clerical workers were more likely to prefer reading cooking, romance and historical romance\(^{140}\).

In my research, the clearest way of seeing trends in education, social class and reading tastes is by looking at each case study library, as they each represent a different area with a distinct socio-economic profile (see chapter three). The reading tastes of the users across the three libraries are shown in Appendix H. The table highlights these patterns across the libraries and indicate some of the links between class background and taste.

At the Fairfield Library Service, located in a more socio-economically disadvantaged area of Sydney (with higher levels of people without tertiary education and in working classes), six out of ten users expressed a preference for chick-lit and other popular fiction, which might also be a reflection of the gender split of respondents at Cabramatta compared with the other two libraries (see Table 2.1, in chapter two), where seven of the ten participants were female.

By contrast, only two participants at Lane Cove Library reported reading chick-lit and ‘trashy’ novels. Both were tertiary educated (one with a Master’s degree and the other in the process of completing a Master’s degree) and read a wide range of material including high literature, historical fiction, and non-fiction as well as the lighter popular fiction genres. This is indicative of cultural omnivorousness (Peterson, 1992)\(^{141}\), in that each participant consumed a range of literary genres and could appreciate both high and low forms of literature.

\(^{139}\) There are also connections between education and book purchasing behaviour, again with higher levels of education associated with increased tendencies to buy books.

\(^{140}\) The findings of Bennett et al. (1999) are similar to James (2010), in his study of working class tastes in Britain from 1930 to 1939, where detective/mystery and love/romance novels were the genresfavoured by working class readers.

\(^{141}\) The cultural omnivore thesis was posited by Peterson in 1992 as a way to understand taste and audience segmentation went beyond merely separating mass and elite audiences. He suggests that individuals from higher social classes, rather than only engaging with elite cultural goods, enjoy and are aware of a wide range of genres and
Interestingly, Narellan and Camden Libraries—both with higher levels of people in vocational training and a low proportion of tertiary qualified or professional users (compared to Lane Cove Library)—also only had two participants indicating that they read the lower forms of genre fiction like chick-lit and action thrillers. The reason appears less to do with cultural omnivorousness and more to do with age. Five of the ten library users were over 60 and they tended to prefer classics and historical fiction. Nicole explained in more detail her preference for certain authors and books:

Because I grew up in the ’40s and ’50s, I did enjoy reading Elizabeth Goudge and Daphne du Maurier. ‘Rebecca’, ‘My Cousin Rachel’, ‘Jamaica Inn’, especially because I know Cornwall very well.

Nicole expressed a desire to read books set in times and places that she knows well, or on topics somehow connected to her personal history. The contemporary authors she enjoyed tended to be writers of historical fiction or books related to Australian history such as Kate Grenville, Gillian Mears, and Hilary Mantel.

One of the participants who revealed a preference for chick-lit was Natasha, a 57-year-old accounts clerk, and she also revealed an age bias: ‘Probably these days I wouldn’t go for anything that the characters were under 30ish, I guess. I wouldn’t. Whereas probably ten years ago it didn’t matter’. This highlights the relationship between age and reading tastes, and how the tastes can change throughout one’s life. A preference for certain types of literature may not only be a product of social class and education levels.

In relation to literary cultural capital and reading habits, participants were also asked if they were keen readers as children. Six out of ten users from Fairfield reported not reading as children, and only picking up a habit for reading during high school or adulthood. By contrast, only two respondents at Lane Cove Library and one respondent from Narellan gave this response—all three were males who did not attend university, which is indicative of trends that women are more likely to be readers and more highly educated people are likely to read more.

The readers I focus on here are not intended to be representative of certain social classes or genders, but instead indicative of the reading and library habits of users from different products. This idea has since been variously critiqued and explored by various scholars (for example, Emmison, 2003; Stichele and Laermans, 2006; Verboord, 2010; van Eijck and Lievens, 2008; van Eijck and Knulst, 2005; Warde et al., 2007).
backgrounds. The selected readers are from different educational and occupational backgrounds, and are different ages and genders, illustrating the diversity of public library users. The demographic details and reading tastes of these users are provided in Appendix H; here I go into more depth behind the table. These stories illustrate the messiness of the links between cultural capital, libraries and reading—it is not quite as clear as people from certain backgrounds or classes will have particular tastes or reading patterns. Instead, these are individuals who can follow expected trends or patterns but still push against the theories in surprising ways.

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Carley is a woman in her mid-50s. When we met in 2013, she told me that she had only been a reader for five years. She had moved to Wagga Wagga, a small city in southern New South Wales with her husband in 2008, and although she was employed, it was part-time and left her with ample time for other activities. She explained, ‘Then we went to a book fair and I got some books and I read a Moriarty\(^{142}\) book and I just went... But leading up to that, I’d read the Monica McInerney books, but you wouldn’t say I was a reader.’

I begin this section with Carley’s story because she provides an interesting contrast to the majority of library users interviewed who identified as readers from a young age. Carley also made a remark further into the interview that exemplifies the issues discussed in this chapter. I asked her if she watched The Book Club\(^{143}\), a book review show that typically discusses literary titles, and she answered, ‘I’m too Westie\(^{144}\) for that.’ This comment highlights a specific stereotype about class association and types of reading—that people from lower socio-economic classes do

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142 Liane Moriarty, an Australian novelist best known for ‘The Husband’s Secret’ and ‘Big Little Lies’ who has had three novels on the New York Times bestseller list simultaneously. Her novels are generally thought of as contemporary women’s fiction.

143 The Book Club (previously First Tuesday Book Club) airs monthly on the ABC, a public broadcaster. Each episode is hosted by journalist Jennifer Byrne and features discussion by Byrne and two regular panellists about one new release book and one classic (Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 2015). The titles are announced ahead of time to give the audience an opportunity to read the books before watching.

144 Western Sydney has historically been an area with lower levels of income and education, with correspondingly higher levels of social disadvantage compared with other parts of Sydney. The identity of being a ‘westie’, that is, someone from western Sydney, is generally associated with a lower social class. The term can be used in a derogatory manner, particularly by those from elsewhere in Sydney. Ho remarks, ‘To be a ‘Westie’ was to embrace a working-class culture of plain talking, manual labour and a general suspicion of art, higher education and other ‘pointy-headed’ pursuits’ (2012, p.35).
not read ‘proper’ literature. This comment also clearly demonstrates the way people self-sort into categories and how culture can be used as a mechanism by which individuals self-regulate, as Ray (2001) suggests. Importantly, it indicates how self-sorting works in relation to already existing categories; Carley’s response reveals an underlying class distinction which informs and shapes her view of the Book Club and stereotypes of the ‘Westie’.

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Connor is a 20-year-old university student from the Fairfield library system, and he presents both similarities and a contrast to Carley. He is from a similar geographic area and class background, from a lower social and economic class, but rather than believing certain types of reading are too high-brow, he actively rejects lower forms of reading such as novels. Connor’s reading is focused on knowledge and information-gathering, for the purposes of learning and self-improvement. He reported using the library for ‘Mainly general knowledge reading. Mainly just non-fiction. I hardly go to fiction.’ The topics he usually reads are humanities and history, and he would read encyclopaedias if he was bored or wanted to relax.

Fiction was considered a waste of time. He explained:

*With non-fiction I feel like I can get something out of it. I can learn from somebody else’s experience and use that to help me, like, live a better life. But fiction it’s kind of, it’s just this one person’s view of the world, and then I think that doesn’t reflect real life. So that’s why I read non-fiction. Like I try to find patterns.*

His disdain for fiction is apparent, admitting:

*I’m kind of snobbish with fiction. If I have to read fiction it has to be from a really good author, like the classics, not the crime authors right now. … I think, in a way I do think fiction is a waste of time. Unless if it’s historical fiction. But like, historical fiction that has, you can get something out of it. Like there’s some mad quote.*

At that, I pointed out that he would not know if there is a great quote unless he read the book and the following exchange occurred:
Connor: Oh yeah I go on Wiki Quotes. And then like, I’ve read some of Tolstoy...
Researcher: Have you read any of Tolstoy’s books?
Connor: No. But I have to say, with fiction, I do go on Wikipedia and read their plots.
Researcher: Which books do you read the summaries of?
Connor: Books that are long. So I did that for Don Quixote, I did that for Jane Eyre. I did it for Brave New World. Just the big books.
Researcher: So now you won’t read the books themselves?
Connor: Yeah. I just look for the quotes and the plot, that’s it.
Researcher: Is this for interest?
Connor: Yeah. Like I’ll want to know what’s so good about that book, because when I read fiction, I rarely remember what was in the book. I only remember segments, for fiction books.
Researcher: With non-fiction, do you read cover to cover?
Connor: Every word. I’ll read to the end, every word.

Connor’s attitude towards fiction and non-fiction reading is clear: non-fiction is worth reading in its entirety, while fiction only merits the summary and selected quotations, and even then only if the book has reached the status of literary canon. He reads for learning and improvement, and in his view, non-fiction is the only kind of reading able to provide this.

On the surface, Connor’s reading habits do not directly reflect a lower social class, in that his reading is not situated within ‘low culture’ or ‘popular’ categories of reading, and indeed he displays a kind of snobbery towards those types of books. However, his dismissal of all fiction reveals a failure to appreciate the literary value of canonical texts and indicates a lack of literary cultural capital. This literary value is typically understood to be acquired by the reader through immersion in the text, and a substitution of summaries and selected quotes for the text suggest a lack of awareness of literary value. Connor sorts himself into a particular category of reader, the ones who read worthy books for self-improvement but an absence of literary cultural capital and understanding of different benefits from various types of reading is instead revealed.

Connor’s focus on learning and education through reading parallels the experience of a user from Narellan Library, Nick. Nick is a retired office clerk in his early 60s who was born in Germany. He completed middle school and an apprenticeship in his youth, and his reading now is entirely non-fiction. He recounted, ‘I used to really enjoy fiction but thought, no, it’s too much fantasy and I’d rather be informed more than being entertained.’ Though he does not display the same level of
disdain towards fiction as Connor, he shares a belief that non-fiction is more worthy reading than fiction.

Although Connor and Nick are quite different in terms of age, ethnicity, and education, their reading tastes reflect a gendered pattern of reading that is also perhaps influenced by social class. Furthermore, their reading habits highlight an important function of the public library. Neither reader engages with the direct ways the library encourages reading such as book clubs or author events, but both use the library’s collections and spaces for browsing, reading, and borrowing books. The library is a driver of reading not only through overt events and promotions but, importantly, through the rather more mundane act of simply existing. The availability of a collection that caters for the learning and recreational needs of its users makes it possible for users like Connor and Nick to browse, read, and discover at their own pace, echoing the nineteenth century aim of the liberal library: to provide learning resources for a self-governing population and to act as a tool for self-improvement and civility.

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Claudia is another user of the Fairfield Library system, primarily using the Bonnyrigg branch. She is a stay-at-home mother in her 40s. After she completed high school, she worked in public service for six years but left after her first son was born. She has always been an avid reader and a user of Fairfield libraries since she was a child:

I remember that my mother used to drop me off at [the Cabramatta Library] and then go and do her shopping. And I would pick my books and sit at the top of the stairs on the landing and wait for her to come back and get me. And by the time she got back I’d read at least half my books.

When she was a child, there were always books in the house, many passed down from her older sister or purchased from second-hand shops:

We’d go to the op-shop and you know, books would be five cents. And I’d get, you know, twenty cents or something. And whatever books I wanted I could have. … It was just, it was just good. Yeah. Lucky, lucky. If you’ve got books, you’ve got everything.
Claudia favours lighter books, and an important part of reading for her is escapism. At the time of our interview, she was rereading the Stephanie Plum series by Janet Evanovich145, and she commented that she was ‘devouring’ the books. The other main fiction genre she reads is chick lit and modern women’s fiction, including authors such as Liane Moriarty, Monica McInerney, Marian Keyes and Debbie Macomber. She also mentioned liking Dan Brown, and said of her reading tastes: ‘Light things. Things I can just pick up and put down really easily. They’re not going to change my life.’

She explained why she enjoys reading, saying, ‘I find it restful and that’s good. My house is noisy and frantic, so just having time out to read is good.’ The notion of reading as an escape is further highlighted by her example of where she reads:

_‘I leave a book in the bathroom [laughs]… And I go in there and hide from the kids. So we’ve got a little rack on the side of the vanity, and I just put my book in there. [laughs] Um, and so I might duck in there and you know, what would normally take a minute or two, I’ll sit for five minutes and read._

The focus on lighter books and the use of reading as an escape from everyday life suggests a low level of literary culture capital and is reminiscent of nineteenth century criticisms of fiction reading as light, feminine and frivolous (Hammond, 2002). Furthermore, Claudia’s tastes align with what Gelder (2004) describes as a common perception popular fiction: generic, simple, commercial and entertaining. By her own admission, Claudia enjoys books that are light, escapist, and entertaining; she does not read for aesthetic or literary value. In fact, she compares reading to ‘going to the movies’, a way of experiencing a life and world that is different to her own. Claudia’s reading tastes reflect Ray’s observation that novels offer readers an opportunity to perceive society through particular lenses and understand the norms and values of the society in which they live. She self-identifies as a reader of low-brow titles and positions herself at a distinct level on a social hierarchy.

The blurriness in the links between reading, taste and cultural capital is highlighted in this example of Claudia’s reading life. Her comments reveal a great appreciation for books, reading and libraries, and reading and library use is a habit that she developed from a young age. However, her reading tastes suggest minimal engagement with books that are typically thought to

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145 These are the books that Librarian I compared to chocolate in chapter five.
have high levels of literary or aesthetic value, which reflects her class background and education levels. But this leads to a questioning of Bennett et al.’s (1999) observation that reading is often regarded as having a higher value than other cultural activities such as watching television, and Librarian I’s belief that any reading is good (indeed, this is a view shared by many librarians and library users interviewed)—is, in fact, all reading ‘good’ reading, or is reading only good when ‘worthy’ books are read? And is the role of the library simply to promote the act of reading itself, or should the library be promoting certain kinds of reading?

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Lincoln’s reading habits share some similarities with Claudia but there are also differences. He is an Anglican minister in his 40s, originally from Wales and has lived in Lane Cove for six and a half years. He is completing his Master of Theology at Moore College, a theological training seminary in Sydney that has a strong academic focus. He studied Computer Science at university and was a keen reader from childhood.

Like Claudia, Lincoln hails from a working-class background. Lincoln’s parents were not keen readers, and he revealed that his father was ‘probably functionally illiterate’ when he was growing up. His mother read slightly more than his father, but neither of them read novels. Lincoln was the first in his family to attend university. He described his family background:

My mother was a full-time mum and I’m the fourth of four children and so she would have been a full-time mum for twelve years when I was born. And my dad’s a second-hand car dealer, so sells cars for a living. Both of them fairly sharp, intelligent sort of people. They grew up in rural west Wales in the 1930s and 40s and yeah, so not bad education systems and so forth there but I think a lot of people coming from their background very much kind of farming … Education was important but they weren’t exposed to it that much.

Lincoln’s descriptions of his parents indicate that although they valued education, they themselves did not receive a high level of formal education. Lincoln’s position as the first person in his family to receive a tertiary education illustrates the contrast between social class and education level. His education and reading tastes reveal a shift in social class; the categories in which people sort themselves are fluid.
Lincoln reported most of his non-fiction reading is theological, but he also reads books on information technology related to his use of computers and his undergraduate degree. Information, skills and self-education form the basis of his non-fiction reading that is unrelated to work and study. Lincoln also reads fiction, and his fiction reading can be divided into two categories, one of which he describes as ‘really trashy general novels’ (such as those by Tom Clancy), which he categorises as ‘fairly low-brow’. He also enjoys science fiction and historical fiction. When I asked Lincoln for his thoughts on popular fiction versus more literary fiction, he answered:

_Trashy reading is good! In that I read the novels I do mainly for diversion and entertainment, I like a good story ... I’ve done a fair amount of literary study, coming from a biblical angle, and I just get a bit frustrated with having to deal with that stuff all the time, that literary stuff. I just want to read something that’s kind of—if it’s going to stimulate my brain, it’s got to entertain me as well._

This comment highlights the importance of light reading for entertainment as a way to ‘switch off’ after spending a large proportion of the day engaged in heavy intellectual reading. Lincoln’s reading tastes and class background demonstrate the lack of clear boundaries and correlation between class and taste that can occur. His reading tastes straddle different social classes. He reads high literary genres that are associated with professionals, as well as a high-status fiction (science fiction). He also finds enjoyment in what he terms ‘trashy novels’, from genres that might be otherwise considered worthless and are most commonly linked with lower classes (Bennett et al., 2001).

Lincoln’s reading tastes indicate different elements of his class background. He has attended university and lives in a wealthy part of Sydney, despite his lower-class family background. He has the literary cultural capital required to enjoy ‘highbrow’ fiction and dense intellectual texts, but his reading tastes also favour ‘lowbrow’ and ‘trashy’ novels that would tend to be associated with lower classes. He could be positioned in what Carter terms the middlebrow, a space in the field of cultural production between the high classes and the masses. Further, his tastes highlight the increasing overlap between literary culture and popular culture discussed by scholars such as Collins (2010) and Gelder (2000, 2004), and are perhaps emblematic of what Davis (2007) refers to as a decline of the literary paradigm in Australia. Highly educated people can both shun and embrace ‘lower’ forms of reading material for various reasons. Lincoln’s experience reveals the blurred lines between class, education, and taste.
Libby is another Lane Cove Library user, a 68-year-old retired teacher from a relatively high social class. She grew up in a wealthy part of Sydney, saying she had ‘a North Shore upbringing’. Sydney’s North Shore area is an advantaged, wealthy part of the city with high levels of income and home ownership (Baum et al., 2005; Stilwell, 1989) and is described in popular commentary as an area of ‘old money’ (Craze, 2012). Libby’s mother was tertiary educated and would borrow books from the local lending library, so Libby grew up in an environment where books and reading were the norm.

Her tastes and reading life indicate a high level of literary cultural capital and engagement with the literary field. I initially met Libby at BookChat, the reading group at Lane Cove Library. Book clubs and reading groups have long been part of Libby’s reading life—she started a book club with a friend in the 1970s when her children were young. She was involved with that group for ten to twelve years, and she explained:

*We decided—having little babies—that we wanted, we’re all educated, tertiary trained and so on, and we felt that our brains were dying and we needed this escape from nappies and just baby-talk, so by creating this forum, we vowed that no one was allowed to talk about the children. You arrived, got your glass of wine or your drink, whatever, it wasn’t a social chit-chat about anything; it was based on the book.*

This anecdote reveals Libby’s high level of engagement with reading. This book group was started as an intellectual exercise, rather than a purely social endeavour. The members of this book group eventually joined with a WEA book club\(^\text{146}\). Participation in the WEA book group involved not only reading a book, but also writing reports and participating in tutor-led discussions. Since leaving the WEA book club in the 1980s, Libby has also participated in a book club hosted by an independent bookshop in inner Sydney.

Another indicator of Libby’s involvement in reading is how she discovers new books. She is influenced by personal recommendations as well as book reviews in respectable newspapers such as Spectrum, the arts and culture section of the weekend *Sydney Morning Herald*.

\(^{146}\text{WEA is an adult education organisation, formed in 1913 in NSW primarily for the education of working adults (WEA, 2014).}\)
She explained that she had no time for books she believed to have no substance: ‘I just decided in my life, I’m 68, and there’s not enough time to read all the books I want to read, so I am only going to read something that is worthy of my time.’

Much of her reading is non-fiction, related to areas of health or travel, though she does enjoy fiction and she names Stella Rimington147’s thriller novels as books she will read if she is in the mood for a thriller: ‘Her thrillers are very real ’cause they’re based on her experiences as head of the MI5 and so I read one first and then I went ‘Wow, this is very interesting’, it’s not over the top or crazy.’

Even Libby’s tastes in fiction signal an element of learning or ‘worthiness’. This focus on ‘worthy’ and substantive reading reflects a high level of literary cultural capital and an active effort to distance herself from what she considers lower forms of reading. This is consistent with Bennett et al.’s (2009) finding about the reading tastes of professional, educated women and in particular their tendency to reject lower genres such as romance.

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Lorcan, another Lane Cove Library user, has the highest level of education attainment of the library user participants. He is an Emeritus Professor in Psychology in his 70s and an avid reader. Neither of his parents had completed secondary school, but they both enjoyed reading and there were many books in the home when he was a child. His mother was a stay-at-home mother and his father held a range of jobs including Petty Officer in the Royal Australian Navy, radio technician, and lighthouse keeper.

Lorcan completed his PhD in the 1960s, and his position as an academic researcher means he completes a lot of work-related reading, but he also reads for entertainment and pleasure. His main reading interests are crime fiction, biographies, and books about cooking, wine and food. His engagement with the books he reads was revealed in two examples. First, he expressed an interest in reading biographies of his favourite authors. The second example is his experience of walking around Boston using a particular crime series as his guidebooks:

\[All\ of\ [Robert\ B.\ Parker's]\ books\ are\ set\ in\ Boston\ and\ I\ wanted\ to\ walk\ around\ Boston\ being\ guided,\ treating\ the\ book\ as\ a\ guidebook,\ even\ though\ it's\ a\ crime\ novel.\ \ldots\ \ I\ enjoyed\ it\ very\ much,\ especially\]

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147 Stella Rimington is a British author who was a former Director General of MI5, the British Security Service.
Lorcan’s experience of reading goes beyond simply reading the book. He enjoys crime fiction novels with depth and realism, and as such he expresses interest in the personal life of the author and the places in which his favourite novels are set.

Like Lincoln and Libby, Lorcan possessed a high level of educational capital and literary cultural capital, with an ability to appreciate a range of literary texts. He admitted to reading ‘trashy’ novels in the form of Lee Child’s novels, and he explained that he thinks of them as trashy because they do not feature a well-rounded character. He further stated:

*But I never think, about whether what I’m reading is trashy, just about whether I’m getting any enjoyment out of them, that’s all I care about. So for instance, I’ve tried to read Dickens, that’s very serious literature but I just couldn’t get into it. … So I genuinely don’t enjoy Dickens even though he’s not thought of as trashy.*

Lorcan elaborated on his point about deriving enjoyment from a novel:

*I think the only function of a novel is to entertain, other people might say it’s to instruct or influence, but I don’t care about that stuff. It’s just to entertain. So the category I use is ‘Does this entertain me or does this not entertain me?’*

Lorcan has the confidence in his own position within a cultural hierarchy to acknowledge that there are trashy novels he enjoys as well as ‘worthy’ titles he does not like. Moreover, his reasons for reading could be considered a sign of the messiness and ambiguity in attempts to sort readers into groups; ordering practices are not total or complete. His leisure reading is purely for pleasure and entertainment, which are reasons more commonly associated with lower social classes. In addition, gender patterns are also not always obvious: despite males tending to prefer factual and documentary reading, in the examples of these Lane Cove library users, it is Libby who focused more on reading for learning. Both Lincoln and Lorcan expressed a desire for leisure reading that entertains.
Unlike many participants, Noah did not identify as an avid reader. He is a butcher in his early 30s, and exhibits low levels of literary cultural capital. Like Connor, his main reason for reading is learning, saying, ‘I don’t really borrow story books to read, like made-up stuff, it’s all about learning, I love learning something.’ Most of his reading relates to fishing, and he mentioned the book he was currently reading was about weather synoptic charts.

Noah is from a working-class background, with a relatively low level of formal education. His father was a carpenter who, although skilled and intelligent, was not a reader. His mother was a stay-at-home mum while the children were young, and then worked in the offices of the botanic gardens. She was a keen reader, primarily of fiction. After Noah completed high school, he entered vocational training and qualified as a butcher. As a child, he was not a reader:

*I didn’t read a lot as a kid. I was a typical young boy, mucked around a lot at school, things like that. It was something that came later when I started realising that books have a great value and you can learn so much from them.*

Furthermore, he acknowledged his limitations in relation to reading and using libraries:

*I’ve generally got something in my head that I’m thinking about, whatever the interest is, so if I can’t find anything I’ll ask somebody, ’cause I don’t really know how to use the library properly, and then they steer me in the right direction.*

He added:

*If there’s something in there and it’s related to what I’m interested in and I think I can decipher it, then yeah, grab it, but if it’s more, if it’s not related to Australia, or if it’s more, not scientific, but more involved, and I can’t understand the wording, then it’s just pointless.*

His comment that he does not know how to search for books in the library without assistance, or that it can take browsing through twenty books before he finds an appropriate title, suggests a low level of familiarity or engagement with books and libraries.
Despite his somewhat limited engagement with reading, Noah still recognises the importance of books. This is evident in his primary reason for visiting Narellan Library—taking his three-year-old son to storytime. He started to take his son to storytime at his sister’s encouragement, partly to spend time with his family (Noah’s mother, sister and nephew attend storytime with Noah and his son) and for his son to develop social skills:

*It’s a day out, there’s a park next door, shops across the road, so we go for coffees, down to the park, and it’s just something to get them into, build their social skills.*

Noah had recently separated from his partner, and storytime was a valuable place where his son could learn to feel comfortable around strangers:

*He was a bit insecure, my son, because of the break-up and whatnot, he’d never had a lot of interaction with other kids, and that was another thing of it, to get him to sit with more kids and start to feel okay and social skills and things like that.*

Storytime was therefore more than simply about reading for Noah’s son; it was an opportunity to spend some time with his family on a day out and a way to be more accustomed to other children and adults.

Importantly, even though Noah himself is not a keen reader, he reads aloud to his son and wants to help his son develop an interest in reading:

*I probably would read a lot more fiction and things if I developed an interest younger, but now it’s only if there’s certain things I want to learn about, and I think that’s from lack of reading as a child as much as I probably should. But I’ve learnt the benefit of books, how precious they are, it’s something I want to enforce in him.*

Noah noticed his son had a good vocabulary and enunciation, which he attributed to books and reading. It is interesting to note that for some parents, they need to be made aware of the benefits of reading to children (as discussed in chapter four) but there are still examples where parents who are not readers will read to their children. From a slightly different perspective from the way I have been discussing reading as a child and family background so far, Noah’s son might not grow up in a household where his parents are avid readers, but he is still being taught
the value of reading and exposed to reading from a young age. The link between class, education and reading might be clear for Noah, but he seems to be going against this for the next generation by instilling an interest for reading in his son.

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Natasha, another Narellan Library user, is an accounts clerk in her 50s. Her highest level of education is vocational training at TAFE, and reading has been a big part of her life since she was a child. She recalled:

_Dad was in the war, in the navy. He used to read the newspaper every day, and be used to read to me._
_I’d sit on his lap after dinner and he’d read me a story. … So obviously books were part of the family._
_That was a nice memory._

The importance of reading and the physical book to Natasha were revealed in two anecdotes. The first was her reaction when she received a Kindle e-reader as a present and the way she spoke about the Kindle:

_Researcher: Where do you normally buy books?_
_Natasha: Well, I have a Kindle. [hides face behind hands]_
_Researcher: That’s okay! That’s fine._
_Natasha: No it’s not, I feel terribly guilty having a Kindle._
_Researcher: Did you buy it?_
_Natasha: My husband bought it for me, so I’ve actually… I didn’t touch it for six months because I went, ‘Oh dear. ’I really love holding, touching, smelling, feeling, turning pages. It’s a different feel altogether._

Natasha’s feeling of guilt at owning a Kindle highlights the importance of the materiality of the book; it is not simply the contents of the book that matter, but also the form in which the content is delivered. This affects the reading experience and, in a way, how Natasha perceives the act of reading and herself as a reader.

The second anecdote that reveals the importance of books to Natasha is her reaction when her family began a road trip for a holiday and she realised she had not packed any books:
We were going away and we got to Picton and I went ‘[Gasp] I forgot my books’ and my husband did a U-turn and went home, ’cause he knew that there was nowhere I could survive the weekend without a book, even if I don’t read it, it has to be next to my bed. It has to be there. Even if I don’t read it for a week, it has to be there. And when we’re going away, he knew I would just complain the whole time, ‘My books, my books!’ even if I didn’t feel like reading. So he just did a u-turn and went back. I went, ‘Do you mind?’ and he went, ‘No, it’s worth it because I know what I’m going to have to put up with otherwise.’

It is interesting that she says she needs to have a book with her, even if she does not read it, as though the book as object holds an element of comfort and security. She might not have time to read, but she likes the knowledge that she could read, and her comment that she needs a book by her bed highlights how deeply ingrained reading is to her regular routines.

Natasha’s favoured books are biographies and autobiographies, mysteries and crime, and female authors and chick-lit. These tend to be the books she borrows from the library, and non-fiction subjects such as crafts and cooking would be books that she already owns. On her preferred fiction genres, she said she likes, ‘Something light that I can just read and it doesn’t matter if I don’t finish it. I can put it down and pick it up again.’ Part of her enjoyment of lighter fiction is due to her schedule; when I asked her about her favourite authors, she listed Colleen McCullough, an Australian author most known for The Thorn Birds, as one of her favourites but also said:

I have tried to read her Roman novels but I’ve been interrupted while I was reading and I’m leaving it ’til I retire because there’s just too many names and too long for me to read in a certain time.

Natasha recognises that at this stage of her life, she does not have the time or inclination to read a particularly heavy or involved book, so she mainly reads lighter books that take less time and concentration—similar to Claudia’s reasons for reading.

The links between taste, cultural capital and ‘legitimate’ reading were highlighted when I asked Natasha her thoughts on the divide between popular fiction and Literature. She replied:

I think sometimes people like to say they read certain things because it sounds more cerebral or something. They think, ‘Oh, you know, I’m very intelligent so I read this’ instead of something they just really enjoy like the chick lit. Like, that’s enjoyable. It’s fun, and you can sit and you don’t have to think, it’s like
when people go to the movies and go, ‘Oh I went and saw some classic thing’, Dr Zhivago, say instead of saying ‘Oh I went and saw some rubbishy thing that was hilarious and I enjoyed myself’ because I think it’s just a matter of what makes you happy, but I think some people think they have to look sort of intellectual or whatever.

Natasha’s own reasons for reading are clear in this statement, and she positions herself apart from people who use their reading choices to create a certain self-image. By saying that some people read certain books to ‘look intellectual’, she is also saying that she is confident in her own position on the social and cultural hierarchy to not feel a need to impress anyone or prove herself. Natasha reads for pleasure and enjoyment, and she also will not read books she finds boring. She further commented:

But I think probably the classics, I was brought up in the ’50s and ’60s, so there were things you read that were classic, like Charles Dickens and I sort of look at them now and think, ‘It bored me.’ I don’t want to read it, it’s boring and I guess I think of that as proper literature, I guess. And I guess I look at modern literature as easy and popular. But I think that’s more of an upbringing thing than what I think myself.

Natasha revealed that she has read classics that would be considered ‘proper’ literature, but also that her reading of those books were more a product of her age rather than her own interest or desire to read the books. Additionally, Natasha only sees the older classics as Literature, and fails to acknowledge modern literary fiction as a form of Literature which suggests limited literary cultural capital.

Her position within a social and cultural hierarchy suggests a lower class: she works in a clerical and administrative position, as defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2013b), a class positioned below managers, professionals and employers. Bennett et al. (1999) found this class to favour romance, historical romance and cooking books. While these are genres and subjects that Natasha does read, she also reads from other categories, and has read books that would be considered classical literature, such as Charles Dickens. However, like Nicole, this may be an indicator of age rather than of a position on a social hierarchy. And like Claudia, Natasha is an avid reader, and has been from a young age.

The background to Natasha’s reading life, and indeed all library users discussed in this section, highlight the complexities and nuances in discussions around class, taste, reading and
cultural capital. There are many influences on what people read, such as age, gender and class, but what emerges as other important factors are individual preference and life cycle. Hobbies, interests, life events, and whether one derives enjoyment and pleasure from learning or escape, or both, have significant influence on what people choose to read. These users, their tastes, and their reasons for reading highlight the diversity accommodated by library collections.

Conclusion

In the eighteenth century and nineteenth centuries, a library was understood as a collection of books, publicly available, for the public good. Glynn, in his history of New York’s libraries during that period, writes:

The collections of the city’s earliest public libraries were founded as means of self-improvement, but the improvement of the private citizen was intimately connected with the good of the republic (2015, p.4).

Now, in the twenty-first century, the public library is understood as no longer merely a collection of books, but rather a site of learning, information, community, and new forms of technology. But the book remains. They are still important material components of the library dispositif that contributes to both its identity and governing task. Mattern describes how reading spaces have been imagined and created in various twenty-first century libraries, observing that ‘Even in designs that pride themselves on their technological progressiveness, such as Seattle’s, reading spaces are still usually given the most majestic spaces’ (2007a, p.110).

From the beginning, books and reading have been at the heart of the library. In the modern public library, they retain an important position: perhaps now sharing the spotlight with different media, new emphases on community and sociality, but nevertheless still firmly present. They are key elements in the governing task of the library, tools by which individuals could improve themselves, and libraries act in concert with various other actors in the fields of literary production and literary consumption to support and encourage a reading habit.

Furthermore, books are not only tools for self-improvement but also ways by which free individuals can self-sort into groups, using the selection of particular books to position themselves on a social hierarchy, as Ray (2001) suggests. The library is part of a wider network of agents and institutions that share a common goal of promoting reading and literacy; together
these actors produce an ordered set of possibilities in which readers sort themselves into different classes and categories. Library users come from diverse backgrounds with various levels of cultural competencies and cultural capital, and the library is a site in which cultural capital theory fits with governmentality theory: library users, through their reading tastes and choices, are self-sorting and self-regulating but within an already structured and ordered library dispositif.

The public library caters for all kinds of readers: readers of varying skill levels, from different class backgrounds, with a range of educational qualifications, and with a diverse array of tastes and interests. The findings in this research support previous work on reading preferences, class and gender (Bennett et al., 1999; 2001; 2009). A significant point is not simply that the library supports or promotes reading, but that it supports and makes possible different types of reading for a diverse, heterogeneous public. It promotes reading and encourages literacy and learning, but the way it appeals to a university student from an immigrant working class background contrasts with the way it attracts an educated professional living in a wealthy part of the city or a busy retiree living in the south-west urban fringe of the city. One fundamental principle of the public library is that it is open and accessible to all, and as such its collections and programs cross different social classes—its users exhibit varying levels of cultural capital. Perhaps more than any other node within the reading industry or the city’s reading infrastructure, it is the public library that makes reading possible for all.
Conclusion

When I began this research in 2012, I had just returned to Australia after living in the United Kingdom, where there were protests and campaigns against library closures and budget cuts. This thesis started as a way to question the relevance and role of public libraries in a context where information and reading formats were rapidly changing, and where ways of access were similarly transforming. In the age of Google, Amazon and e-books, is there still space for the humble branch library? With that in mind, I set out to explore the following question: How does the public library position itself in a city’s reading infrastructure? I questioned how it makes possible reading in public and reading by the public.

In answering these questions, I considered not only the day-to-day mundane processes that result in books on shelves that can be borrowed for free, but also concerns around the social history of libraries, how libraries act as a governing device on behalf of state and commercial actors, and the contemporary trends that influence what the library is and could become. The library is seen both as a dispositif, a governmental instrument that consists of an arrangement of devices that influence behaviour, and a cultural institution that inculcates reading. This research provides a historically grounded account of municipal libraries as they exist today, with an empirical focus on the decentred strategies of ordering, collection building, and design that create a reading infrastructure.

Using empirical data in the form of interviews with librarians and library users, as well as professional library and council documents, I explored the depth of the library as an institution and the details of how it is used. Libraries are not only places where books can be borrowed for free and information is stored. They are open, accessible, unique spaces that cater for the educational, cultural and leisure needs of diverse populations. Positioned at the intersection of commercial and civic forces, public libraries are the part of the city’s reading infrastructure that caters to a range of tastes, backgrounds and reading abilities.

In *The Rule of Freedom*, Joyce provides a socio-historical account of freedom and governmentality that takes into consideration the ‘contingencies of time and place’ by examining the city in nineteenth century Britain. His focus is on social ordering as a process rather than social order as an object, and in particular the role and agency of both people and things. In this research, I engage with the notion of the self-governing citizen and zoom in on a micro locale for the exploration of the ideas of the self-governing citizen and governmentality: the
contemporary public library in Sydney, Australia. How might these theoretical approaches illuminate the processes involved in the creation and use of these libraries? Several observations can be made.

First, the role and power of the state and the library as an institution has shifted. In early public libraries of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, a more overt goal of creating learned, self-motivated citizen was evident and the library was a clear site of influence. This was indicated by examples such as the censorship of books deemed to be dangerous or misleading, the marginalisation of fiction, and the motivations of philanthropists like Andrew Carnegie for whom libraries were meant to serve for the wholesome leisure and educational pursuits of the working class.

This notion of control, influence, and the library as a site for the state to exert power over its citizens is less overt in the contemporary library. Rather, the contemporary library is a site where different kinds of power meet in different ratios. Importantly, there has been a shift in power to the commercial realm of book publishing and book retailing. Fuller and Rehberg Sedo, and Collins, examine the effects of commercialisation and media on the reading industry, and they highlight the importance of marketing, commercial strategies, and multiple media platforms on the promotion and distribution of books. As a result, libraries are no longer just institutions where a core collection of ‘worthy’ books are disseminated to engaged and self-improving citizen readers, but are also sites where popular, heavily promoted, best-selling titles are borrowed by consumer readers, as I discussed in chapters five and seven. The library user here has the power to affect the metrics by which libraries are increasingly measured and valued by their borrowing choices. The self-governing citizen in the contemporary library has become a free consumer whose selections are influenced by the book and entertainment industry.

Second, Joyce’s focus on social ordering as opposed to social order is pertinent in this examination of libraries. The spaces and collections of libraries are in constant flux: furniture is rearranged, books are constantly discarded and acquired, and the library itself is a public space that sees constant movement and use during opening hours. The contemporary library is not a static, ordered site but instead a fluid space where people and objects are continually ordered and re-ordered. Ordering activities are seen in how collections are arranged and organised, the demarcation of space and placement of furniture, and in the way library users sort themselves as readers and library users. This was examined in chapters four and seven, where I explored the creation of different spaces that accommodate different uses and users, and where I explored the way readers order and sort themselves.
Third, the framework of the oligopticon offers insight into understanding the self-governing citizen in the contemporary library. Although there are security measures in public libraries that are panoptic, such as the use of surveillance cameras, oligoptic principles are prevalent: library spaces are often designed for light and lines of sight which encourage visibility. The library user can exercise freedom in where and how they move, what books or materials to take from the shelves, and what kind of reading they undertake in the library. Yet library users are not completely free; the library is a regulated space. They are governed by librarians and each other, following both rules and codes of conduct set by the librarians or municipal authority as well as their own scripts of expected behaviour in a library.

The ‘self-governing citizen’ framework thus allows for a more in-depth examination of various defences of public libraries in popular discourse, primarily the discussions around the library as a community space which are now a key part in library supporters’ answers to the question of the library’s relevance. The library is a public and open space, but it is more than a place where anyone can spend an afternoon or a site where social capital might be generated. It is a visible arm of the state, where the local municipality engages with its constituents, imparts information and knowledge, and encourages them to become active and responsible citizens.

Significantly, a key part of this analysis relates to a point made at the beginning of this thesis: the focus of this research is the branch library, libraries that are often low on the hierarchy of cultural institutions and even in the types of libraries available to the public. The libraries studied in this research are small, local libraries that act as everyday spaces for many of their users. Yet they are also part of a broader ecology of cultural and reading institutions, and the analysis in this thesis described the life of these state structures. They play important roles as municipal spaces that encourage reading and fostering community, and that order and influence the behaviour and habits of their users. But another key point that can get lost in the grander narratives is that for many users, these are ordinary everyday spaces, an expected part of the urban landscape.

This thesis sought to understand and explore how libraries were created through different judgements and decisions made over time by librarians, legislators, architects, and council employees. The library is presented here as an institution that embodies values of publicness, literacy, and community engagement (in the various understandings of the term). The three case study libraries at the heart of this research express these values in different ways, each library responding to its local context.
In terms of literacy and the promotion of reading, it might be argued that Lane Cove Library is performing better than many other public libraries, given its focus on literary events and the higher ratio of literary fiction to popular fiction in its collection. At the same time, however, it could also be argued that Whitlam Library plays a more important role given its focus on supporting reading in other languages and providing resources for library users who are not fluent in English.

As for publicness and community engagement, Narellan Library and its council authority, Camden Council, are more explicit than the other two libraries about their commitment to community. Social connections, relationships, and engaging with their constituency is at the forefront of their mission and values. Literacy and reading remain important, but it is not the key role of the library.

This assessment is not to say that one library is ‘better’ than the others, whether at promoting literacy or engaging with communities or acting as a public space. Rather, it is to observe that geographic context matters. The theoretical framework underpinning this thesis, the dispositif, aligns with this. The dispositif is a heterogeneous assembly of components such as discourses, legislation, architectural forms, and administrative measures. In the context of public libraries, and the understanding of the library as a dispositif I suggest that each of these components and how they are arranged are strongly influenced by their particular geographic contexts and local council authorities. Public libraries overall strive to be neutral, accessible, socially equitable spaces, and how this is achieved is influenced by the characteristics of the populations served. This thesis examined these various components and geographies to promote a new understanding of public libraries as governmental spaces in a contemporary context.

These findings are relevant for the levels of government making funding and strategic decisions about public library futures, and they also provide insight for library practitioners and library users. In the remainder of this conclusion, I reflect on the future of public libraries and what the perspective of the library as a dispositif can offer for researching and understanding libraries in a changing world.

**Library futures**

A library is not a singular building that emerges in isolation; it is an array of devices, architectural forms, objects, legislation and authorities that is embedded in wider infrastructures and networks. The framework of the dispositif allows for a greater understanding and deeper
exploration of both how the library is made and how it is positioned within this larger context. In this final section, I look at some key components of the library dispositif and how they might affect the public library of the future.

First, there are questions raised about the position of one key material component of the library: the book. There is a broader conversation taking place about the position of the book occurring in both scholarly circles and popular media: the birth and death of the printed book (Ehrenreich, 2011; Mandal, 2014; Price, 2012; Seigler, 2015; Young, 2007). These discussions cover the impacts on publishing, book retailing, reading, and pose questions such as ‘Is the printed book dead?’ and ‘Is it the death of the death of the book?’ Recent statistics reveal that perhaps the death of the book has been overstated, e-book sales are slowing or declining, and some publishers and booksellers are seeing a reverse migration back to print books (Alter, 2015). The book is not dead yet.

However, the changing status of the print book does have profound implications for library resources and spaces. The space and digital technologies provided by libraries are becoming increasingly important, as I discussed in chapter one, and there are new methods of book storage and retrieval that involve technologies such as robotics and motorised carts (Chettle, 2014; Mashberg, 2015). In more and more libraries, physical books are being moved off-site or in closed stacks, to be retrieved when requested.

Furthermore, the issue concerns not only the position of the physical book (both in terms of status and physical location within the library), but also with the book more generally. There was a significant shift in what Librarian B believed to be core to a library’s identity from his formal interview in 2013 and an informal conversation I had with him in 2015. In 2013, he asserted that the collection is what makes a library a library, as I mentioned in chapter five. The books and knowledge contained within the library distinguish it from a community centre or printing shop. In 2015, as he explained to me the change in strategic drive of Whitlam Library from a collection-centric library to a citizen-centric library, he seemed less certain about the role of the collection to the library’s identity or purpose.

This research was undertaken at a time when libraries across the world are undergoing a rapid transformation to meet the cultural, knowledge and recreational needs of the twenty-first century. Not only are there changing expectations of library services and resources in terms of access to print books, there are shifts now occurring in reading culture, particularly with the increasing overlaps between popular culture and literary culture and new media formats, which are changing how and what people read. The library, as one node in this reading infrastructure,
will be negotiating and finding its position as these transformations continue to unfold. These developments offer research opportunities in exploring the public library in a new reading landscape.

Second, as I alluded to in the discussion of physical book storage, the physical spaces and architectural forms of the library are changing. The focus on the user as a citizen rather than a scholar or reader points to an important shift happening in libraries, with a trend towards ‘makerspaces’ and creative spaces. Makerspaces, also known as ‘hackerspaces’ refer to spaces used by members of the public for content creation; community spaces where people can gather to collaborate, share resources, and create new objects or knowledge using a variety of tools.

Public libraries are increasingly providing dedicated spaces and technologies such as 3D printers for content creation and collaboration (Forsyth, 2015a; Kelly, 2013; Moorefield-Lang, 2015; Slatter and Howard, 2013). The Edge, part of the State Library of Queensland, is a prominent example of a makerspace in Australia. It was launched in 2010 with a vision of being a space for creative collaboration, offering a range of facilities, technologies, spaces, and workshops (State Library of Queensland, n.d.). The emphasis of public libraries as a site or resource for content creation is highlighted by the 2015 National Library Week in the US, which ran from 12–18 April, 2015. Libraries and library users were encouraged to share on social media what they have created using library resources and tag the posts with the hashtag #librarymade (Forsyth, 2015b; American Library Association, 2015).

Third, discursive elements of the library dispositif continue to play an important role in shaping library spaces and services. Changes in available technologies and perceptions of the public library have led to questioning and imagining of public library futures from the profession itself. In 2009, the State Library of NSW produced the report Bookends Scenarios: Alternative futures for the Public Library Network in 2030 (State Library of New South Wales, 2009) which used scenario planning to explore potential futures of the world in general and how libraries might need to adapt. These scenarios considered factors in the areas of the natural environment (e.g. climate change), society (e.g. ageing population, urbanisation), politics (e.g. levels of government and infrastructure spending), economics (e.g. unemployment, creative economy), culture (e.g. popular culture, consumerism), and technology (e.g. internet, e-books, copyright). In 2015, the State Library took this report further. It produced Building on the Bookends Scenarios: Innovation for Public Libraries 2014 to 2030 (State Library of New South Wales, 2015d) and revisited some of the predictions from 2009 to look at libraries in the present moment. This report notes that just six years on, some of the predictions have eventuated, such as much greater mobile phone
ownership by Australian teenagers, a doubling of internet sessions in public libraries since 2009 and particularly WiFi use, more co-location with council and community services, and a proliferation of electronic media formats.

Envisaging library futures is not occurring only in Australia. Recently, Mattern shifted her focus from large flagship libraries to smaller branch libraries and worked on the design team with Urban Omnibus, The Architectural League and the Centre for an Urban Future on a new vision for New York’s branch libraries (Urban Omnibus, 2014; The Architectural League NY, 2014). A report was released in September 2014 by the Center for an Urban Future, Re-envisioning New York’s Branch Libraries, which analysed the present state of branch libraries in New York and offered a blueprint for how they could be funded, managed, and designed in the future. The types of projects and visions discussed in the project and in much of Mattern’s writing point to a public library that is citizen-centric, collaborative, and focused around these ideas of content creation and serving the user. These ideas are occurring not only in the large downtown libraries but also in smaller branches.

As I have suggested in this thesis, these reports are important discursive components of the library dispositif. They are written and produced by various actors including designers, scholars and librarians from a range of different libraries, and they have the power to influence how libraries are constructed and perceived. These reports, both in their existence and in their contents, highlight this.

Fourth, and finally, the role of the local state plays a key role in the existence and delivery of public library services. The overarching framework structuring this thesis concerned the role of the library as a governmental instrument, drawn from the works of Foucault (1977, 1980, 1991), Joyce (1999, 2002, 2003), Rose (1996a, 1996b, 1999), and Otter (2002, 2004, 2008). Joyce (2003) argues that local libraries were clear strategies for ‘making liberal communities’, and they acted as sites of civic identity and proper behaviour as well as places where knowledge was transparent. A key thread throughout this thesis was the library as part of the local municipality and a visible way for the local council to fulfil its civic duties and connect with its constituency.

In NSW, public libraries are part of the council, library employees are council employees, and the policies, procedures, budgets and communications of the library are council-approved or the direct responsibility of the council. They are typically located in a central part of the local government area, close to the council chambers, town hall, and other cultural amenities. For example, Whitlam Library is located next to a community centre and just down the street from a community youth club, Lane Cove Library is attached to a shopping complex that houses an
outdoor plaza and recreational area, down the street from council offices, and Narellan Library is next to the council’s administrative centre. Functionally and geographically, the library is a visible part of the municipal council.

This thesis is therefore not only about libraries but it is also about the municipality. What is the role of the local council in the context of the library dispositif? The NSW Government recently introduced ‘Fit for the Future’, a reform of local government that began in 2011 with discussions of the long-term future of local councils (New South Wales Government, n.d.). These reform proposals have led to uncertainty over the effects on library services, with suggestions there may be library closures and affect more vulnerable populations (Davies, 2015).

Organisational change and restructures have already been occurring within NSW councils, and this affects library staffing levels and roles. This has, in some library services, led to cuts in library operational and acquisitions budgets, certain staffing positions no longer recruited which increased pressure on existing staff roles, and greater casualisation of the workforce.

In December 2015, the NSW Government announced reforms that will force certain councils to amalgamate, creating larger municipalities—the number of councils in NSW will fall from 152 to 112 under these reforms (Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 2015). The implications for libraries of these amalgamations are uncertain. This story about public libraries is also a story about municipalities and councils, and the future of the two is closely entwined. The perspective of the library as a dispositif set up in this thesis offers a way of researching these futures: what new forces will there be to act on the library, and what governing role might it have in a larger more centralised municipality?

These larger municipalities cover greater geographic areas which affects the local context in which library services operate. There is a potential for existing library services needing to cater to new and different socio-demographic groups. In terms of the library dispositif, this may lead to a new set of heterogeneous institutional, physical and administrative mechanisms and devices, arranged in different ways to existing library services. The local context in which the library dispositif is grounded will transform, as the library services of these amalgamated councils serve larger and potentially more socio-economically and culturally diverse populations. Governance structures and relationships between the council and library may also change—in the case of

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148 The information about the effect of these organisational changes on libraries comes from librarians at two different library services in NSW who wished to remain anonymous.
Camden Council and the library service, the relationship between the council and library changed as the council grew, and the amalgamations which enlarge council areas may have similar effects for other councils and library services. These new municipalities have the potential to introduce new tensions and relationships between the various devices and apparatuses within the library. As part of this governmental infrastructure and municipal framework, the library will need to determine its position within this new and uncertain environment. This opens up research opportunities in exploring the relationship between the library and the municipality and what this means for the library as a dispositif.
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Appendixes

Appendix A: Approach letter sent to library managers

Ms Jen Li
PhD Candidate
Institute for Culture and Society
University of Western Sydney

19 June 2012

Re: The role of public libraries in civic life and the literary world

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a doctoral candidate at the Institute for Culture and Society at the University of Western Sydney. My thesis topic addresses the issue of public libraries in contemporary society, with a focus on Sydney.

My research will involve studying three libraries as case studies. I am interested in using Mosman Library as a case study in my research, and I am writing to see if you would be interested in participating in the research. Ideally, I would like to spend some time shadowing staff as they conduct their everyday duties, examining the full range of activities conducted in the library, and observing how library spaces are used by the public. I would also like to conduct interviews with staff and patrons. In return for such access, I would be happy to share my written research summaries with you as appropriate, as well as lodging a copy of the final thesis with you. This library was selected because of its age, location and population catchment, information obtained from the State Library 2009/10 Public Libraries Statistics report.

The goal of the research is to explore how libraries can generate civic, social and cultural capital, as well as how the library fits into the wider literary world. Some issues that may be considered include new technologies, the use of space within libraries, and interactions between patrons as well as patrons and staff.

If you are interested in discussing this further, I would be happy to meet to outline the ethical framework that I would use in the conduct of the research, which would include anonymity of respondents and the library, if required, secure handling and storage of data, and the right to withdraw from the research at any stage.

If you have any questions regarding my research, please contact me or my supervisors. My details are as follows:

Mobile: 0466 xxx xxx
Email: jen.li@uws.edu.au
Supervisors: Professor Donald McNeill (d.mcneill@uws.edu.au), Professor Tony Bennett (t.bennett@uws.edu.au)

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this request.

Yours sincerely,

Jen Li
### Appendix B: Libraries contacted for participation in research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Library service</th>
<th>Circulation in 2009/10</th>
<th>Library Service</th>
<th>Circulation in 2009/10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sutherland</td>
<td>1,971,018</td>
<td>Rockdale</td>
<td>688,109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>1,841,531</td>
<td>Waverley</td>
<td>673,142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hills, The</td>
<td>1,499,128</td>
<td>Blue Mountains</td>
<td>602,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hornsby</td>
<td>1,345,888</td>
<td>Leichhardt</td>
<td>601,316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blacktown</td>
<td>1,134,787</td>
<td>Marrickville</td>
<td>517,720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warringah</td>
<td>1,133,953</td>
<td>Canada Bay</td>
<td>517,334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randwick</td>
<td>1,059,245</td>
<td>Lane Cove</td>
<td>504,576</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bankstown</td>
<td>1,044,329</td>
<td>Kogarah</td>
<td>411,277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liverpool</td>
<td>1,005,737</td>
<td>Woollahra</td>
<td>409,904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ryde</td>
<td>984,165</td>
<td>Pittwater</td>
<td>398,817</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ku-Ring-Gai</td>
<td>964,492</td>
<td>Manly</td>
<td>392,431</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairfield</td>
<td>945,888</td>
<td>Mosman</td>
<td>389,654</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willoughby</td>
<td>940,504</td>
<td>Ashfield</td>
<td>332,649</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penrith</td>
<td>903,951</td>
<td>Auburn</td>
<td>325,813</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parramatta</td>
<td>873,375</td>
<td>Hawkesbury</td>
<td>324,568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campbelltown</td>
<td>829,599</td>
<td>Burwood</td>
<td>309,126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hurstville</td>
<td>794,218</td>
<td>Camden</td>
<td>299,812</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canterbury</td>
<td>746,910</td>
<td>Strathfield</td>
<td>239,541</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holroyd</td>
<td>737,489</td>
<td>Botany Bay</td>
<td>159,051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Sydney</td>
<td>698,256</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table B1: Sydney libraries by circulation figure, 2009/2010. Yellow indicates libraries that were sent approach letters.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Government Area</th>
<th>Average Total Income 2008/09&lt;sup&gt;149&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Local Government Area</th>
<th>Average Total Income 2008/09&lt;sup&gt;150&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Auburn</td>
<td>37,871</td>
<td>Rockdale</td>
<td>43,719</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairfield</td>
<td>38,396</td>
<td>Hawkesbury</td>
<td>44,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canterbury</td>
<td>39,301</td>
<td>Penrith</td>
<td>44,682</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bankstown</td>
<td>40,543</td>
<td>Burwood</td>
<td>45,175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holroyd</td>
<td>41,826</td>
<td>Hurstville</td>
<td>45,432</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campbelltown</td>
<td>42,922</td>
<td>Blue Mountains</td>
<td>45,547</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liverpool</td>
<td>42,750</td>
<td>Botany Bay</td>
<td>48,215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blacktown</td>
<td>43,225</td>
<td>Strathfield</td>
<td>48,255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parramatta</td>
<td>43,594</td>
<td>Camden</td>
<td>48,670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada Bay</td>
<td>62,138</td>
<td>Kogarah</td>
<td>48,847</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pittwater</td>
<td>64,332</td>
<td>Ashfield</td>
<td>49,748</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waverley</td>
<td>77,007</td>
<td>Ryde</td>
<td>51,018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leichhardt</td>
<td>77,380</td>
<td>Marrickville</td>
<td>52,782</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manly</td>
<td>77,444</td>
<td>Sutherland Shire</td>
<td>53,597</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willoughby</td>
<td>77,569</td>
<td>Baulkham Hills</td>
<td>54,309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lane Cove</td>
<td>78,969</td>
<td>Hornsby</td>
<td>55,827</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ku-ring-gai</td>
<td>85,727</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>57,212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>North Sydney</strong></td>
<td><strong>87,405</strong></td>
<td>Warringah</td>
<td>57,887</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunters Hill</td>
<td>105,730</td>
<td>Randwick</td>
<td>59,446</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woollahra</td>
<td>116,922</td>
<td>Canada Bay</td>
<td>62,138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mosman</td>
<td>130,637</td>
<td>Pittwater</td>
<td>64,332</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table B2: Sydney LGAs by household income. Yellow indicated libraries that were sent approach letters.

<sup>149</sup> From all sources, excluding Government pensions & allowances.

<sup>150</sup> From all sources, excluding Government pensions & allowances.
Do you love your library?

If you do, Jen Li, a doctoral student at the University of Western Sydney, would love to talk to you!

Jen is doing her research on public libraries in Sydney, and studying libraries as public reading spaces.

She is looking for library users to talk to about their experiences and motivations of using [x library], and who would be interested in keeping a diary/log of their library trips and books borrowed over a three month period. Each interview will take approximately thirty minutes to one hour.

If you are interested in participating or would like more information, please contact Jen on 0466 xxx xxx or jen.li@uws.edu.au.

Thank you for your interest!
Appendix Cb: Notice in library e-newsletters for user recruitment

Do you love reading? Jen Li, a doctoral student at the University of Western Sydney, is researching what influences people’s reading choices, and would love to talk to you about your reading and library usage habits. Each interview will take approximately one hour, and respondents must be over 18. If you are interested, please contact Jen on 0466 xxx xxx or jen.li@uws.edu.au for more information.

Appendix D: Approach forms for library users

Research Project Title: Spaces for books: Curating, browsing and reading in public libraries

My name is Jen, and I am a PhD student at the University of Western Sydney. My research examines public library use and reading habits - who are using public libraries and how? Who is reading what, and why do they read?

I would like to interview readers and library users. Each interview will take no more than one hour, will take place at the library, and at a time convenient for you. Please contact me if you have any questions on 0466 xxx xxx or jen.li@uws.edu.au.

___________________________________________

Date of interview: __________________________

Time of interview: _________________________
Appendix E: Interview guides for librarians and library users

Librarians interview guide

Theoretical questions (librarians)

1. What is the place of the library in the organisation of reading institutions?
2. How is the role of the library as a cultural intermediary produced through their collection development policies and event programs?
3. How does the configuration of library space reflect hierarchies of reading activities?

Questions asked to librarians

TQ1
What relationships does the library seek to develop with schools, universities/colleges and bookshops? What existing relationships are there?

TQ2
What role did libraries play in the 2012 program the National Year of Reading? e.g. marketing, displays or events?

What policies are there in regards to collection development, and what kind of information about the local population informs collection development? [books, newspapers, magazines, other media; also use secondary data in terms of community statistics from Profile ID and ABS, profiles of libraries they give to suppliers, official policies from council]

(Related to Q3)
What are the policies regarding fiction and non-fiction development?

‘Proper’ literature versus popular fiction? Thoughts? What should the library do? What would you like to see libraries do? What does the library actually do?

What are the policies regarding user suggestions of titles and when to purchase additional copies of a title? [if data is collected on event attendance it would be useful, as well as most popular titles checked out in a year]

What is involved in the creation of the event program? [other data on events e.g. program, attendance]
What do you see as the most important role of the library? [e.g. education? community space? open to all?]

*Questions about the library [answered through observation, notes on library design, available floor plans]*

**TQ3**

How are the books organised in the library? What is next to what, how and where are they shelved? [Is there a hierarchy of genres?]

How and where is the other material in the library, and what kind of organising system is there for magazines, newspapers, CDs, DVDs?

What kind of signage and labelling is there? How are books and other material categorised?

What spaces are there in the library for study, or for reading, or for discussion?

How do users relate to these spaces and use these spaces?

*Library users interview guide*

**Theoretical questions (users)**

4. How does embodied cultural capital affect the way the reading life of a user and how the library is used?

5. What do the event attendance, reading tastes, reading habits, and borrowing habits reveal about the relationship between cultural capital and taste? (specifically, where do popular fiction and Literature fit in both the library’s collection and what is actually read and borrowed?)

6. How useful or relevant is the concept of the ‘cultural omnivore’ in understanding the reading and library habits of library users?

*Questions asked to users*

**TQ4, TQ5, and TQ6**

Do you read magazines? If yes, which ones? How often?

Do you read newspapers? If yes, which ones? How often?

Do you do much reading online e.g. blogs? What do you read online and how often?

What kinds of books do you like reading the most? Why?
Do you read both non-fiction and fiction? What do you read more of? Reasons for reading?

What are your favourite topics/genres to read?

Who are your favourite authors? (Name three)

What are your favourite books? (Name three)

Do you borrow books from the library? What kinds of books? How often do you borrow?

Which libraries do you go to? How often and for what purpose would you go to each one?

Do you borrow books from other people? From whom do you borrow?

Do you buy books?

How many books do you own? (rough estimate)

Where do you buy books? How often?

What influences your decision to buy or borrow?

What influences your reading choices? (if necessary prompt: friends’ recommendations, book reviews, what book reviews, favourite authors, genres, librarian/bookseller recommendations, blurbs, covers, browsing?)

Do you read book reviews in newspapers, magazines or online? If yes, what?

Do you watch book review shows such as The ABC book club/First Tuesday book club? If yes, how often?

Do you listen to book shows on the radio? If yes, what?

When and where do you usually read?

How often do you go to this library?

Why do you go to the library/what do you usually do at the library?

Do you attend events at the library? If yes, which ones? How often?

Do you ever make suggestions for new titles at the library?

What do you usually read at the library? How long is a typical library visit? Where in the library do you usually read?
Can you tell me a bit more about yourself? (prompt: education achieved, where you grew up, going to library as child, reading as child, profession or occupation)
Appendix F: Participant information statements

Participant information statement: librarians

Participant Information Sheet - Librarian Interviewees

Dear Participant,

You are being asked to participate in a research project titled:

   Spaces for books: Curating, browsing and reading in public libraries

What is the study about?

Public libraries are changing. They have moved from lofty ideals as places of learning and civility, to being open and accessible places for community, technology, entertainment as well as education. This research focuses on one specific element of the library’s offerings: reading. I use Bourdieu’s theory of cultural capital and subsequent models of the ‘cultural omnivore’ and cultural mobility posited by various scholars to explore patterns of reading and library use.

Firstly, I ask who is reading what. How do ideas about cultural capital feed into the ‘popular fiction’ versus ‘Literature’ debate? Secondly, I question who is using the public library, and how they are using it. What kinds of people are regular users of public libraries, and does that differ across geographic locations? Thirdly, I examine the spatial design of the library itself. Do the spaces within the library reflect a hierarchy of reading materials and methods of reading, and if so, how?
What does the study involve?

You will be asked to participate in one interview, approximately one hour in length. You will be asked about your role and experiences as an employee at Whitlam Library in Cabramatta.

How much time will the study take?

Approximately one hour.

Will the study benefit me?

The findings of the project hope to develop greater understanding of how public libraries are used and evaluate their ongoing relevance and importance.

Will the study involve any discomfort to me?

There are no likely significant social, legal or professional risks in participating in this project. Your participation is entirely voluntary, and the interview will be held in a time and location convenient to you. All information will be stored securely and remain confidential.

How is this study paid for?

This project is funded both by the federal government’s Australian Postgraduate Award (APA) and the University of Western Sydney.

Will anyone else know the results? How will the results be disseminated?

The results will be confidential and only the researcher will have access to information participants share. Interviews will be audio recorded and the resulting material transcribed. Interview material will be analysed and writing-up primarily in the form of a thesis. Results will also be presented in academic seminars and conferences.
Can I withdraw from the study?

Participation is entirely voluntary and you are free to withdraw any time without giving a reason and without any consequences.

Can I tell other people about the research?

Yes, you may tell other people about the research. If they would like further information or participate in the researcher they can contact the researcher.

What if I require further information?

When you have read this information, the researcher will discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more at any stage please contact the researcher (details below).

Ms Jen Li
Mobile: 0466 xxx xxx
Email: jen.li@uws.edu.au

What if I have a complaint?

This study has been approved by the University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee. The approval number is H9982.

If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Office of Research Services on tel +61 2 4736 0229 fax +61 2 4736 0013 or email humanethics@uws.edu.au.

Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

If you agree to participate in this study, you may be asked to sign the Participant Consent Form.

Thank you for your interest in this project!
Dear Participant,

You are being asked to participate in a research project titled:

**Spaces for books: Curating, browsing and reading in public libraries**

**What is the study about?**

Public libraries are changing. They have moved from lofty ideals as places of learning and civility, to being open and accessible places for community, technology, entertainment as well as education. This research focuses on one specific element of the library’s offerings: reading. I use Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital and subsequent models of the ‘cultural omnivore’ and cultural mobility posited by various scholars to explore patterns of reading and library use.

Firstly, I ask who is reading what. How do ideas about cultural capital feed into the ‘popular fiction’ versus ‘Literature’ debate? Secondly, I question who is using the public library, and how they are using it. What kinds of people are regular users of public libraries, and does that differ across geographic locations? Thirdly, I examine the spatial design of the library itself. Do the spaces within the library reflect a hierarchy of reading materials and methods of reading, and if so, how?
What does the study involve?

You will be asked to participate in one interview, approximately one hour in length. You will be asked about your experiences and thoughts of reading and using [x Library].

How much time will the study take?

Approximately one hour.

Will the study benefit me?

The findings of the project hope to develop greater understanding of how public libraries are used and evaluate their ongoing relevance and importance.

Will the study involve any discomfort to me?

There are no likely significant social, legal or professional risks in participating in this project. Your participation is entirely voluntary, and the interview will be held in a time and location convenient to you. All information will be stored securely and remain confidential.

How is this study paid for?

This project is funded both by the federal government’s Australian Postgraduate Award (APA) and the University of Western Sydney.

Will anyone else know the results? How will the results be disseminated?

The results will be confidential and only the researcher will have access to information participants share. Interviews will be audio recorded and the resulting material transcribed. Interview material will be analysed and writing-up primarily in the form of a thesis. Results will also be presented in academic seminars and conferences.

Can I withdraw from the study?

Participation is entirely voluntary and you are free to withdraw any time without giving a reason and without any consequences.
**Can I tell other people about the research?**

Yes, you may tell other people about the research. If they would like further information or participate in the researcher they can contact the researcher.

**What if I require further information?**

When you have read this information, the researcher will discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more at any stage please contact the researcher (details below).

Ms Jen Li  
Mobile: 0466 xxx xxx  
Email: jen.li@uws.edu.au

**What if I have a complaint?**

This study has been approved by the University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee. The approval number is **H9982**.

If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Office of Research Services on tel +61 2 4736 0229 fax +61 2 4736 0013 or email humanethics@uws.edu.au.

Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

If you agree to participate in this study, you may be asked to sign the Participant Consent Form.

**Thank you for your interest in this project!**
Appendix G: Participant consent forms

Participant Consent Form

Research Project Title: Public Reading Spaces: Curating, browsing and reading in libraries

1. I have read the information sheet for this study and have had details of the study explained to me.
2. My questions about the study have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.
3. I also understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time, or to decline to answer any particular question in the study.
4. I agree to provide information to the researcher under the conditions of confidentiality set out on the Information Sheet.
5. I wish to participate in the study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.
6. I consent to being audio recorded during interview sessions with the researcher.

____________________________________________________________________

Participant’s Name: __________________________

Participant’s Signature: _________________________

Date: / /

Contact details: ________________________________
Researcher’s Name: ________________________________

Researcher’s Signature: ________________________________
Appendix H: User demographics and reading backgrounds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Level of education achieved</th>
<th>Fiction</th>
<th>Non-fiction</th>
<th>Read as child?</th>
<th>Genres/subjects read</th>
<th>Favourite authors or books</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caleb</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Early 30s</td>
<td>Counsellor at a university</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Psychological dramas, biographies, psychology theory, true crime, crime documentaries, poetry</td>
<td>Sylvia Plath, Irvine Welsh, Hubert Selby Jr, Patricia Highsmith, Chuck Palahniuk, Charles Bukowski</td>
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<td>Charles</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Early 30s</td>
<td>Social worker</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Started with easy books because his English wasn't good. Romance, comedy, fantasy, adventure. Now reads harder books.</td>
<td>The Golden Compass, Pride and Prejudice, Life of Pi, Tim Winton</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Graduated</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>Reading Preferences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Caitlin</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Early 30s</td>
<td>Communications, working in public service</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Classics as well as contemporary novels, Pride and Prejudice, Gone with the Wind, Animal Farm, Girl with the Dragon Tattoo trilogy, One Day, Jodi Picoult, the occasional Jackie Collins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Callie</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Psychologist</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Depends on hobby of the month - crochet, floristry. Fiction is mostly chick-lit and crime. Also war and soldier books. Sophie Kinsella, Lindsay Kelk, Jodi Picoult, Sue Grafton, Khaled Hosseini</td>
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<tr>
<td>Catherine</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Librarian (at Cabramatta)</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Science, cookbooks and craft for NF, mysteries, romances, Stephanie Laurens, Henning Mankell, Donna Leon, Ben</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Highest Education</td>
<td>Completed</td>
<td>Chose to Continue</td>
<td>Study Areas</td>
<td>Authors</td>
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<td>Claudia</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Homemaker</td>
<td>High school</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Aaronovitch, Malcolm Gladwell, Simon Winchester</td>
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<td>Carley</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>Retired accounts clerk</td>
<td>Year 10</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Janet Evanovich, Liane Moriarty, Marian Keyes, Monica McInerney, Dan Brown, Debbie Macomber, Carole Matthews, Catherine Alliott</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Read Fiction</td>
<td>Read Drama</td>
<td>Read Non-fiction</td>
<td>Reading Taste</td>
<td>Reading List</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connor</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>University student</td>
<td>2nd year university</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Humanities and history, sometimes short stories and classics</td>
<td>With the Old Breed by Eugene Sledge (war memoir, WWII)</td>
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<td>Cynthia</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>50s</td>
<td>Clerical worker</td>
<td>Year 10</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Historical fiction, historical crime fiction, biographies, some fantasy and science fiction</td>
<td>Edward Rutherford, Ken Follett, CJ Sansom</td>
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<td>Charlotte</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>60s</td>
<td>Retired public servant</td>
<td>High school</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Biographies, history, health, human condition and human stories</td>
<td>Burial Rites (Hannah Kent), The Light Between Oceans, Kate Morton, Helen Garner, Geraldine Brooks</td>
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<td>Pseudonym</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Level of education achieved</td>
<td>Fiction</td>
<td>Non-fiction</td>
<td>Read as child?</td>
<td>Genres/subjects read</td>
<td>Favourite authors or books</td>
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<tr>
<td>Luke</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Early 30s</td>
<td>Paramedic; studied primary education at university</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Running, photography, some medically-based books</td>
<td>Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy, have read Ben Elton and Nick Hornby</td>
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<td>Laura</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Policy advisor</td>
<td>Master's in Media</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Everything. Literary fiction, crime, political biographies, sports biographies, chick-lit</td>
<td>Janet Frame, Run Rabbit, Virginia Woolf, Don DeLillo, Dostoevsky, David Foster Wallace, Gail Jones, Howard Jacobson, Robert Bolaño, Donna Tartt, Sarah Waters, Peter Temple</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Finishing Education</td>
<td>Reading?</td>
<td>Writing?</td>
<td>Reading Material</td>
<td>Favorite Authors</td>
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<td>Liam</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Late 30s</td>
<td>Planner, PhD student in geography</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>History, travel guides</td>
<td>Chinese historical fiction book</td>
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<td>Liane</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>30s</td>
<td>PhD student</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Art, interior design, travel, philosophy, language, poetry, young adult fiction (has a 16 year old daughter) but doesn't read a lot now due to PhD</td>
<td>Classics, Tolstoy</td>
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<td>Libby</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>60s</td>
<td>Retired teacher (primary then computers)</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Travel, geography, personal development, medical, ethics, spirituality</td>
<td>Stella Rimington</td>
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<td>Lincoln</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Mid-40s</td>
<td>Minister</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>IT, theology, science fiction, 'really trashy general novels', history/historical fiction, biographies, WWII history</td>
<td>Tom Clancy, Robert Harris, Hilary Mantel, Geoffrey Robertson, Iain Banks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>Comics</td>
<td>Biographies</td>
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<td>Leon</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>30s/40s</td>
<td>Architectural design consultant</td>
<td>Polytech (NZ)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Sports biographies</td>
<td>Ben Elton</td>
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<td>Logan</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>HSC student</td>
<td>Completing HSC</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Classics, used to like fantasy</td>
<td>Harry Potter, Great Gatsby, Breakfast at Tiffany's</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lorcan</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>Emeritus Professor in Psychology</td>
<td>PhD in psychology</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Crime fiction, cooking, wine, food, biographies of blues guitarists, biographies of crime writers he likes</td>
<td>Elmore Leonard, Peter Temple, Len Deighton</td>
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<td>Lyle</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Early 50s</td>
<td>Butcher</td>
<td>Year 10</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>WWII, history, geography, sport, woodwork</td>
<td>None</td>
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<td>Pseudonym</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Level of education achieved</td>
<td>Fiction</td>
<td>Non-fiction</td>
<td>Read as child?</td>
<td>Genres/subjects read</td>
<td>Favourite authors or books</td>
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<td>Natalie</td>
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<td>80</td>
<td>Retired nurse</td>
<td>Nursing school</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Crime, self-help, biography, medical</td>
<td>PD James, Ruth Rendell, Joanna Trollope, Jeannette Walls, Mary Wesley, Susan Hill</td>
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<tr>
<td>Naomi</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>70s</td>
<td>Retired primary school teacher</td>
<td>Teacher's college</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>History, novels, biographies, crime fiction, historical fiction, self-development</td>
<td>PD James, Elizabeth George, Julia Baker, Stephanie Dowrick</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nicole</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>70s</td>
<td>Retired physiotherapist</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Crime, historical fiction, history, biographies</td>
<td>PD James, Robert Goddard, Agatha Christie, Elizabeth Goudge, DAPHNE du Maurier, Elizabeth Gaskell, Kate Grenville, Peter Carey, Hilary Mantel, Helen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Began University Degree</td>
<td>Completed School</td>
<td>Completed University</td>
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<td>Nora</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>70s</td>
<td>Retired library assistant</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>History, English literature, French literature, philosophy/theology, biography, mystery</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nathan</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>University student, studying library and information science</td>
<td>Currently studying at university; have been to TAFE</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Mystery, action, true crime, reading for uni</td>
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<td>Nick</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Early 60s</td>
<td>Retired office clerk</td>
<td>Middle school, apprenticeship</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Archaeology, photography, indigenous issues, computers, recipe books, practical subjects</td>
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Garner

CS Lewis, Jonathan Edwards, Michael O'Carroll, Marilynne Robinson, Edward Rutherford, George Eliot, Charlotte Bronte, PD James, Georgette Heyer

Matthew Reilly, George RR Martin

Josephine Flood
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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Professional training</th>
<th>Read</th>
<th>Watch</th>
<th>Like</th>
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<td>Noah</td>
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<td>Early 30s</td>
<td>Butcher</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Fishing, weather, some musicians' biographies</td>
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<td>Natasha</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>Accounts clerk</td>
<td>TAFE</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Biography, mystery, women's fiction, chick-lit, craft, cooking, gardening</td>
<td>Rosamunde Pilcher, Collette McCulloch, Sue Grafton, Elizabeth George</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ned</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Editor of local newspaper</td>
<td>Year 12</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>History, biography, Australian history</td>
<td>A Million Wild Acres by Eric Rolls, Banjo Patterson, Henry Lawson</td>
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<td>Nancy</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>30s/40s</td>
<td>Library assistant</td>
<td>University</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Home organisation, home decorating, craft, health, biographies, character-driven fiction/drama</td>
<td>Margaret Atwood, Helen Garner, John Green, The Shipping News by Annie Proulx, Tim Winton</td>
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</table>