



The National Library of Australia exterior. Image credit: National Library of Australia

Library Service Overview

The National Library of Australia (NLA) www.nla.gov.au is situated on First Nations land of the Ngunnawal and Ngambri people in Parkes Place, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory.

Policy on Environment and Sustainability

NLA [Environmental Policy](#) (2014)

Program/initiative/infrastructure summary

As the National Library of Australia, the focus of the case study is on the Library's Environmental Policy. The Environmental Policy gives effect to government policy requirements for all agencies of the Australian Government to operate in environmentally sustainable ways through the development, implementation, and maintenance of a formal Environmental Management System (EMS) for all operations.

The NLA states its commitment to improving environmental sustainability across all operations and embeds sustainable development principles into its major projects (NLA, 2015), for example:

- Sustainable procurement and construction practices in the newly constructed Special Collections Reading Room such as the use of energy efficient and LED lighting, sustainable building materials (e.g. recycled insulation, sustainable floor covering products, re-use of heritage furniture). The Head Contractor also reports to the NLA on volumes of waste recycled, energy use, and water consumption on-site.
- The Environmental Management System is implemented by an EMS Coordinator who is responsible for the development of Environmental Action Plans, monitoring and reporting on the Library's environmental performance, and periodic reviews. The EMS Coordinator is also responsible for ensuring all staff, contractors, consultants, volunteers, Library users and the public are aware of the Environmental Policy and the EMS.

- The Library has a comprehensive recycling system and in 2014-15, it achieved re-accreditation with the ACTSmart Office Recycling Program and won a business sustainability award for being the 'Biggest Recycler' (i.e., diverting most waste from landfill to recycling; NLA, 2015).

In addition to infrastructure initiatives, in its most recent *Annual Report*, 'sustainability' is mentioned at least ten times throughout, including the core values statement (NLA, 2020, p.5). The report also links sustainability principles to its organisational capability, its financial sustainability, environmental protection, environmentally sustainable storage facilities (NLA, 2020, pp. 39-57). The *NLA Annual Report (2020)* explicitly refers to the UN SDGs albeit in limited detail (NLA, 2020, pp. 39, 57, 149). There is an implied reference to SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals; UN, 2015) regarding the Library's partnerships in the Pacific region 'to improve knowledge of and access to Pacific cultural heritage resources' (NLA, 2020, p. 36).

Given the spirit and intent of the NLA Environmental Policy, a partnership approach is critical to the implementation of the policy. For example, the EMS Coordinator works with a range of internal and external partners to develop and deliver environmental initiatives across all operations. Partners' awareness of the NLA's commitment to sustainability and framing all operations with reference to the Environmental Policy is fundamental to achieving its stated aims.

In each NLA Annual Report since 2011, there is a section on Environmental Management. Monitoring of EMS is embedded in all operations and periodic reviews are undertaken (NLA, 2015).