

AUTUMN 2013

OLD AGE AND DECLINING HEALTH NO BARRIER TO A HAPPY SOCIAL LIFE

Australians in their 70s and 80s enjoy better social relationships and report higher satisfaction with their lives compared to people in their 50s, according to a study released today.

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LIBRARIES AND LIFELONG LEARNING

Public libraries are a powerful resource, providing activities, programs and materials to enable lifelong learning.

Successful individuals, families, businesses and communities are the product of lifelong learning - continuing development of knowledge and skills beyond formal education.

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Digital Hubs

Australia's latest digital hub was opened at ACT's Gungahlin Library. It is one of up to 40 such centres opened in libraries and community venues around Australia since the Australian Government announced the \$13.6 million program in 2011

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Australia and the Asian Century

Asia's rise is changing the world. This is a defining feature of the 21st century—the Asian century. These developments have profound implications for people everywhere.

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Grants for Seniors

Grants of up to \$20,000 are now available to deliver informal and accredited courses for Seniors, thanks to the Gillard Government's \$4.2 million Productive Ageing through Community Education program.

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Learning Links

Learning Links is about people learning from each other. It's a friendly, relaxed way to learn one-on-one or in small groups at little or no cost. It provides opportunities for individuals to try new skills without the pressure of formal classes.

[Read more](#)

The Reading Hour

We hope to hold this event in 2013 - watch this space.

[*Read more*](#)

Get reading

Moreton Bay Region Libraries are getting people to read with an exciting program funded by The Australia Council for the Arts called The Get Reading! Author Touring Program.

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National Seniors

Media release

6 March 2013

Old age and declining health no barrier to a happy social life

Australians in their 70s and 80s enjoy better social relationships and report higher satisfaction with their lives compared to people in their 50s, according to a study released today.

Despite being in poorer health and more likely to be living alone, people aged over 70 said they were less likely to feel socially isolated and, instead, had more companionship than their younger cohorts.

The findings were released in the National Seniors Productive Ageing Centre report *Staying Connected: Social Engagement and Wellbeing Among Mature Age Australians*.

National Seniors chief executive Michael O'Neill said the results were surprising.

"This older cohort is more likely to report that they socialise as much as they want to and they have all the friends they want or need, so overall the quality of their social relationships is higher than for younger people," he said.

"Compared to those in their 50s and 60s, they also reported higher levels of being comfortable with their living standards and felt free to make decisions about how they live their lives."

But the study raised some worrying concerns about the wellbeing of people aged in their 50s, O'Neill said.

"People in their 50s are not doing as well. They are more likely to feel isolated from others and more likely to feel a lack of companionship," O'Neill said.

"Possible reasons for this include potential stressors of workforce participation or unemployment, sharing their household with children and the hours involved in caring for their elderly parents."

The researchers surveyed 2,123 members of National Seniors Australia aged between 50 and 89 years.

Michael O'Neill is available for comment on 0448 125 898.

Media contact: Casey-Ann Seaniger 0422 391 627.

With 200,000 members Australia-wide, National Seniors is the consumer lobby for the over-50s. It is the fourth largest organisation of its type in the world.

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Libraries and Lifelong Learning

LIBRARIES AND LIFELONG LEARNING

Public libraries are a powerful resource, providing activities, programs and materials to enable lifelong learning.

Successful individuals, families, businesses and communities are the product of lifelong learning - continuing development of knowledge and skills beyond formal education. They are inquisitive, open to change and adaptable to whatever life may offer.

Lifelong learning opportunities at the library for people of all ages include:

- Guest speakers
- Author talks
- Workshops and seminars
- [Book clubs](#)
- Discussion groups
- [Story time](#) and [Giggle and Wiggle](#)



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GUNGAHLIN LIBRARY PROFILE

A good reason to visit Canberra

When Libraries ACT's Gungahlin branch opened in May 2011, it was instantly added to the list of places Australian library lovers must visit.

With 3000 square metres over two floors, there is space for two conference rooms, each with a seating capacity of 100, theatre-fashion; dedicated zones for different elements of the collection, with retail-style genre groupings backed by Dewey decimal order; a freestanding glass room in the centre of library for quiet study; a spacious children's area and dedicated lounge for young people; a café; courtyard; and rooms designed for seminars, workshops, and informal learning.

It's big and it's beautiful. The architectural vision and attention to detail can be seen in everything from the colourful shades on the exterior of the building to the 'pick up sticks' décor in the children's zone.



If you are in Canberra anytime, take the opportunity to visit. In the meantime, here is a few of the highlights.

1. Alexander Bunyip – can you think of another library that has a giant statue of a mythical city-devouring creature to guide people to its entrance?
2. Carpets – some wonderful quotes about books, reading, and libraries are woven into the carpet and the red stripes leading to screens for the online catalogue is a neat touch.
3. RFID – you may be getting blasé about automated return chutes, conveyors, and sort bins, but this is RFID on a large scale. There are two feeds – one conveyor belt dropping from the first floor to the ground floor, the other on the same level. It's so impressive, especially for younger borrowers, that there is a screen by the smart chute where you can watch your returned books follow their journey through the system.
4. Sound domes – or cones of silence, if you are a *Get Smart* fan. They look like glass lampshades, but turn them on and you can watch a film, Skype, or listen to music without disturbing your neighbours.

5. The red centre – it looks nothing like a traditional library desk
6. Interactive floor – a mat-like covering in the children's area onto which graphics are displayed. Kids can jump around bursting bubbles, and there is no mess to clean up.
7. The Hangout – “What are we going to call the area for young people?” “I don't know.” “What are they going to do in there?” “Just hang out.” And that's how it got its name. Giant screen, a curved wall like a skate park, comfy bean bags: of course teens are going to hang out here.
8. Signage – bright red triangles provide an easy, can't-miss-it, way-finding system





Australia's newest digital hub

At Libraries ACT's Gungahlin Library we also have Australia's newest digital hub opening in February. It is one of up to 40 such centres opened in libraries and community venues around Australia since the Australian Government announced the \$13.6 million program in 2011.

Around half of the digital hubs announced so far are situated in libraries. It is a perfect and obvious fit. Libraries already bring together community, technology, and learning, rendering them natural locations for digital hubs where residents can access online training and experience NBN-enabled services and technology.

Sarah Steed, Learning Community Manager at Libraries ACT, was involved in the initial application for digital hubs funding, which resulted in \$436 800 [GST exc] of Australian Government funding to set up a community learning centre for digital literacy in the Gungahlin Library.

"Gungahlin is the first place in the ACT to connect with the National Broadband Network (NBN)," Sarah said. "When the second round of applications to become a digital hub came out last year, Libraries ACT applied in partnership with the ACT Government. Our bid combined three elements – the digital hub, Digital Enterprise (training for small businesses), and Canberra Digital Community Connect (access to egovernment) – and I think that was a big thing in our favour. Collaborating with other interests gave us a better chance of success and it makes perfect sense to have one location servicing the needs of several audiences."

Sarah makes it sound easy, but the funding application required a detailed budget proposal and an innovative program of training and information sessions. "It was a team effort," she said. "We brought the library staff together for a workshop where we brainstormed blue sky ideas. Librarians have some pretty amazing ideas and we came away thinking, 'What can we do now and what can we build on for the future?' There was no shortage of creativity."

The other factor that supported the Gungahlin application was the focus on Canberrans with limited digital literacy skills and access to the internet. In less than two years, Libraries ACT has established strong relationships with community leaders representing marginalised and disadvantaged Australians and these relationships contributed to Gungahlin Library's funding success.

Sarah's colleague Kate McAlister is new to the position of NBN Project Manager. She joined Libraries ACT in November, with a background in communications, media, and teaching. Her role will be to manage the digital hub program and be the lead trainer and facilitator.

"I will be working with library staff as well as bringing in community volunteers to help run the courses," she said. "There will be one-on-one sessions of about half an hour, where people can come in and ask questions, bring in their own devices, and generally use us as a kind of help desk. There will also be group sessions for up to ten participants, which will be pre-booked with the library staff or online through our website."

The training sessions will cover the basics of getting started on the internet, using email, online banking, and accessing e-government services. "People will be using a variety of ICT devices to access the internet using very fast broadband delivered by the NBN," Kate said.

The digital hub is located near the main entrance of the library and will have the same opening hours as the library. It will be filled with the latest state-of-the-art equipment and technology, including writable walls, laptops, ereaders, and small screen devices, such as tablets, gaming consoles, and a smart TV. "It will be an open environment that's fun and educational at the same time," she said.

Three design companies and the library team have all had a hand in the fit-out, which has been influenced by visits to the Inspire Centre at the University of Canberra and Yellow Edge, a Canberra-based centre for Australian leadership development and training.

"We will have a fabulous resource, but the next challenge is to get people over the threshold. Other libraries that have already launched their digital hubs have been very helpful. We have learned a lot, for example, from the Armidale digital hub in NSW. To really get the word out there, we will be talking to community groups, visiting other community centres, and walking down the main street passing out flyers. We will do whatever we need to do to reach our target audiences."

That will also involve addressing people's reluctance towards, or lack of understanding about, the online world.

"It's not always so much about fear of the technology, it can be about being overwhelmed by all the options that are out there," Sarah said. "People can be concerned about the time commitment if they get involved in social media. They can feel that technology just isn't relevant to their lives. We think that the people who will use the digital hub will benefit from the group environment, will feel safer with other people around them, will be better prepared for a trial and error approach."

On 21 December 2012, there was a relatively low-key event at Gungahlin Library, attended by Senator Kate Lundy, Andrew Leigh MP, and Andrew Barr MLA, and a number of government advisors and fibre optic technicians. Everyone adjourned to the room that would become the digital hub, which was then an empty shell with just a laptop in one corner. The high speed internet access kicked in straight away. The test successfully behind them, the Libraries ACT team could then concentrate on the launch. Bookings will be open to the local community from next week and the first digital hub session will be held on 1 February.

As Sarah confessed, "Being in Canberra and only a short drive from Parliament House, we are conscious of being in the spotlight. We are expecting a close eye to be kept on our digital hub. It adds that tiny bit of

extra pressure, but we're confident our facilities and programs will meet everyone's expectations and hopefully even exceed them."

Ewan Brown, Gungahlin Community Council, comments:

"People expect the NBN to be turned on the minute the cable is laid, so we've been waiting a long time for the opportunity to take advantage of the access to very fast broadband. The digital hub will help a lot of people, particularly older people, get to grips with technology and how to use it – surfing the web, making better use of digital services, even using a mobile phone. The training will also make people more aware of the security issues. It will help people use the internet for things other than just entertainment and we're pleased that there is a separate stream for businesses.

"It will also help the Community Council. The more people we can get through the doors [of Gungahlin library], the more people who will be accessing our information electronically. We had a hard copy newsletter, now we've decided to go entirely digital, using email and Facebook to pass on news, with alliances with other groups. We're pleased that the digital hub will pick up older demographics who are not so tech-savvy.

"Gungahlin library is a dynamic place and with the new digital hub, it's going to be even more dynamic."

Gungahlin library facts

- Opened May 2011
- Cost approximately \$12 million
- 3000 square metres
- 30 800 users each month
- 71 100 items in the collection
- 39 900 loans each month
- 11 members of staff
- Joint use with Gungahlin College



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Australian & the Asian Century

Executive summary



[Executive summary \(1.6 MB PDF\)](#)

Asia's rise is changing the world. This is a defining feature of the 21st century—the Asian century. These developments have profound implications for people everywhere.

Asia's extraordinary ascent has already changed the Australian economy, society and strategic environment. The scale and pace of the change still to come mean Australia is entering a truly transformative period in our history.

Within only a few years, Asia will not only be the world's largest producer of goods and services, it will also be the world's largest consumer of them. It is already the most populous region in the world. In the future, it will also be home to the majority of the world's middle class.

The Asian century is an Australian opportunity. As the global centre of gravity shifts to our region, the tyranny of distance is being replaced by the prospects of proximity. Australia is located in the right place at the right time—in the Asian region in the Asian century.

For several decades, Australian businesses, exporters and the community have grown their footprint across the region. Today, for Australia, the minerals and energy boom is the most visible, but not the only, aspect of Asia's rise. As the century unfolds, the growth in our region will impact on almost all of our economy and society.

An increasingly wealthy and mobile middle class is emerging in the region, creating new opportunities. They are demanding a diverse range of goods and services, from health and aged care to education to household goods, and tourism, banking and financial services, as well as high-quality food products.

Beyond economic gains, there are many valuable opportunities for building stronger relationships across the region, including through closer educational, cultural and people-to-people links.

Our nation also has the strength that comes from a long history of engagement with countries in Asia.

Australia's relationships in our region are strong and robust, including with Asian nations like China, Japan, India, Indonesia and the Republic of Korea (South Korea). But in this Asian century we must enter a new phase of deeper and broader engagement.

This White Paper provides a roadmap for the whole of Australia—governments, business, unions, and the broader community—in this next phase. Our goal is to secure Australia as a more prosperous and resilient nation that is fully part of our region and open to the world.

Australia starts from a position of strength. Just as our region has a lot to offer us, we have a lot to offer our region. We have strong, world-leading institutions, a multicultural and highly skilled workforce, and a productive, open and resilient economy, which is one of the strongest in the world. These assets have been reinforced by a series of economic reforms and good decisions made over past decades, including Australia's world-beating actions to avoid the worst impacts of the Global Financial Crisis.

Our strengths have long been reflected in Australia's interaction with countries in Asia. Over the past 50 years, Australia's trade with Asia as a share of our total trade has risen dramatically. Our financial, political and cultural links have deepened. We have strong relationships and close friendships with countries across the region.

But Australia's success will be based on choice, not chance. In order to succeed, we must sustain the policy settings and pathways that have served us well. We need to reinforce our strong social foundations, including our national institutions, our cultural diversity and our outward-looking society.

We will need to do more than this—we all need to respond to the rapid changes occurring in our region.

Australians need to act in five key areas in order to succeed in the Asian century.

First, irrespective of how the Asian century evolves, Australia's prosperity will come from building on our strengths. We need to reinforce the foundations of our fair society and our prosperous, open and resilient economy at home. We need to build on areas where we already perform well, in order to extend our comparative advantage. Critical to this will be ongoing reform and investment across the five pillars of productivity—skills and education, innovation, infrastructure, tax reform and regulatory reform.

Second, as a nation we must do even more to develop the capabilities that will help Australia succeed. Our greatest responsibility is to invest in our people through skills and education to drive Australia's productivity performance and ensure that all Australians can participate and contribute. Capabilities that are particularly important for the Asian century include job-specific skills, scientific and technical excellence, adaptability and resilience. Using creativity and design-based thinking to solve complex problems is a distinctive Australian strength that can help to meet the emerging challenges of this century. As a nation we also need to broaden and deepen our understanding of Asian cultures and languages, to become more Asia literate. These capabilities are needed to build stronger connections and partnerships across the region.

Third, Australia's commercial success in the region requires that highly innovative, competitive Australian firms and institutions develop collaborative relationships with others in the region. Australian firms need new business models and new mindsets to operate and connect with Asian markets.

We will work to make the region more open and integrated, encouraging trade, investment and partnerships. Firms will adapt their business models to seize the opportunities created in our region.

Fourth, Australia's future is irrevocably tied to the stability and sustainable security of our diverse region. Australia has much to offer through cooperation with other nations to support sustainable security in the region. We will work to build trust and cooperation, bilaterally and through existing regional mechanisms. We will continue to support a greater role for Asian countries in a rules-based regional and global order. Australia's alliance with the United States and a strong US presence in Asia will support regional stability, as will China's full participation in regional developments.

Fifth, we need to strengthen Australia's deep and broad relationships across the region at every level. These links are social and cultural as much as they are political and economic. Improving people-to-people links can unlock large economic and social gains. While the Australian Government plays a leading role in strengthening and building relationships with partners in the region—with more intensive diplomacy across Asia—others across a broad spectrum spanning business, unions, community groups and educational and cultural institutions also play an important role. Stronger relationships will lead to more Australians having a deeper understanding of what is happening in Asia and being able to access the benefits of growth in our region. In turn, more of our neighbours in the region will know us better than they do today.

Success in the Asian century requires a whole-of-Australia effort, with businesses, unions, communities and governments being partners in a transformation as profound as any that have defined Australia throughout our history.

It is in the interests of all Australians—and therefore in the national interest—to develop the capabilities and connections that Australia will need, so that we can contribute to, and learn from, the region, and take full advantage of these opportunities.

The challenges ahead require sustained effort; Australians cannot build stronger relationships or learn new skills overnight, or even over five years, especially given the diversity of the countries in our region. Some actions can be taken immediately, but others require further conversation among communities across the nation, detailed planning and careful implementation over a generation.

Chapters 1 to 4 of the White Paper explain the extraordinary rise of Asia over recent decades and its likely future to 2025 (Figure 1). They examine Australia's place in Asia and our outlook to 2025. This sets the scene for a roadmap for Australia in the Asian century.

Chapters 5 to 9 set out an ambitious set of national objectives and pathways to guide Australia to 2025 (Figure 2). Advancing and implementing these national objectives sets the agenda for taking full advantage of the Asian century, but achieving these objectives will require a concerted and coordinated effort from the entire community.

Figure 1: Setting the context for the Asian century

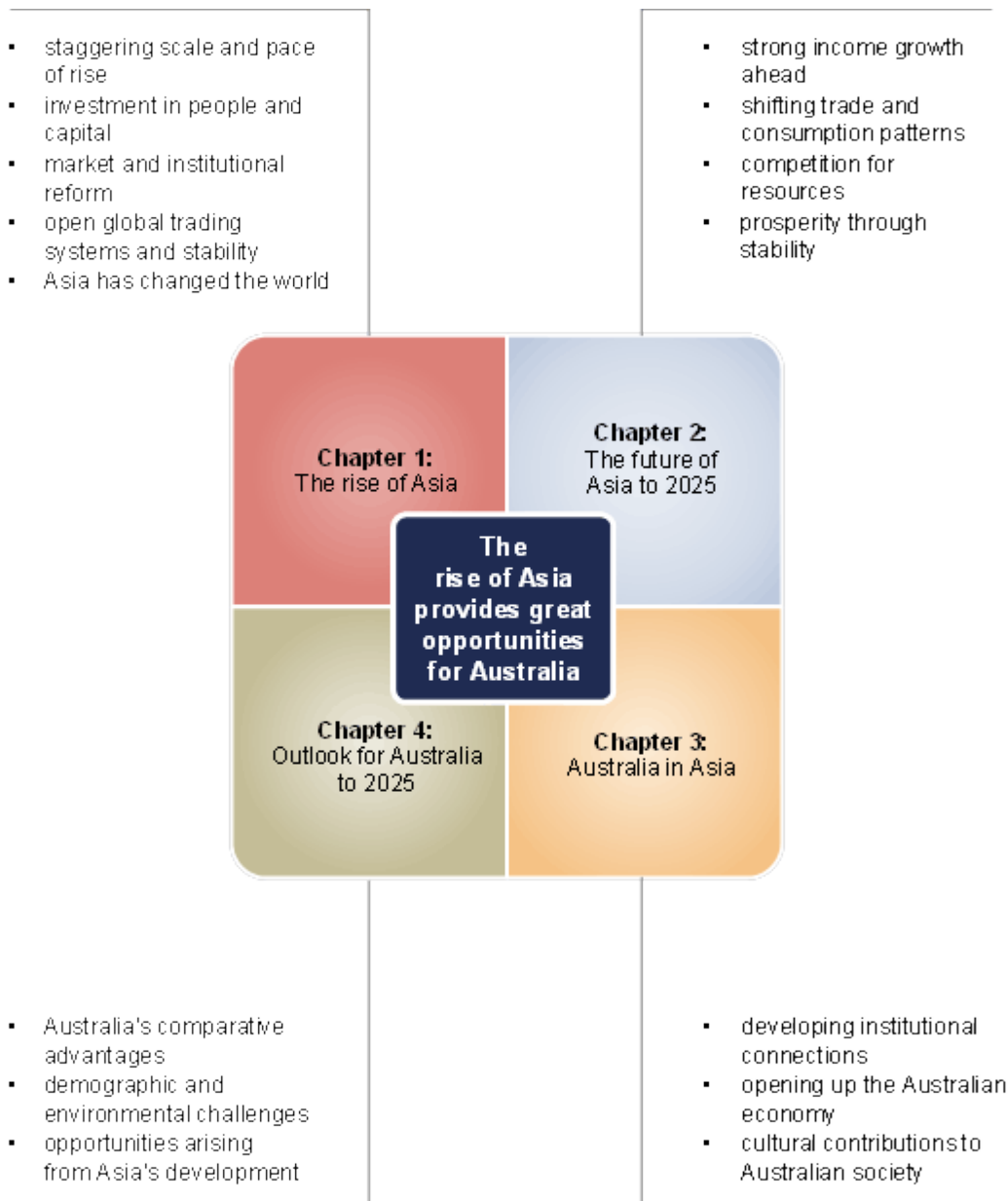
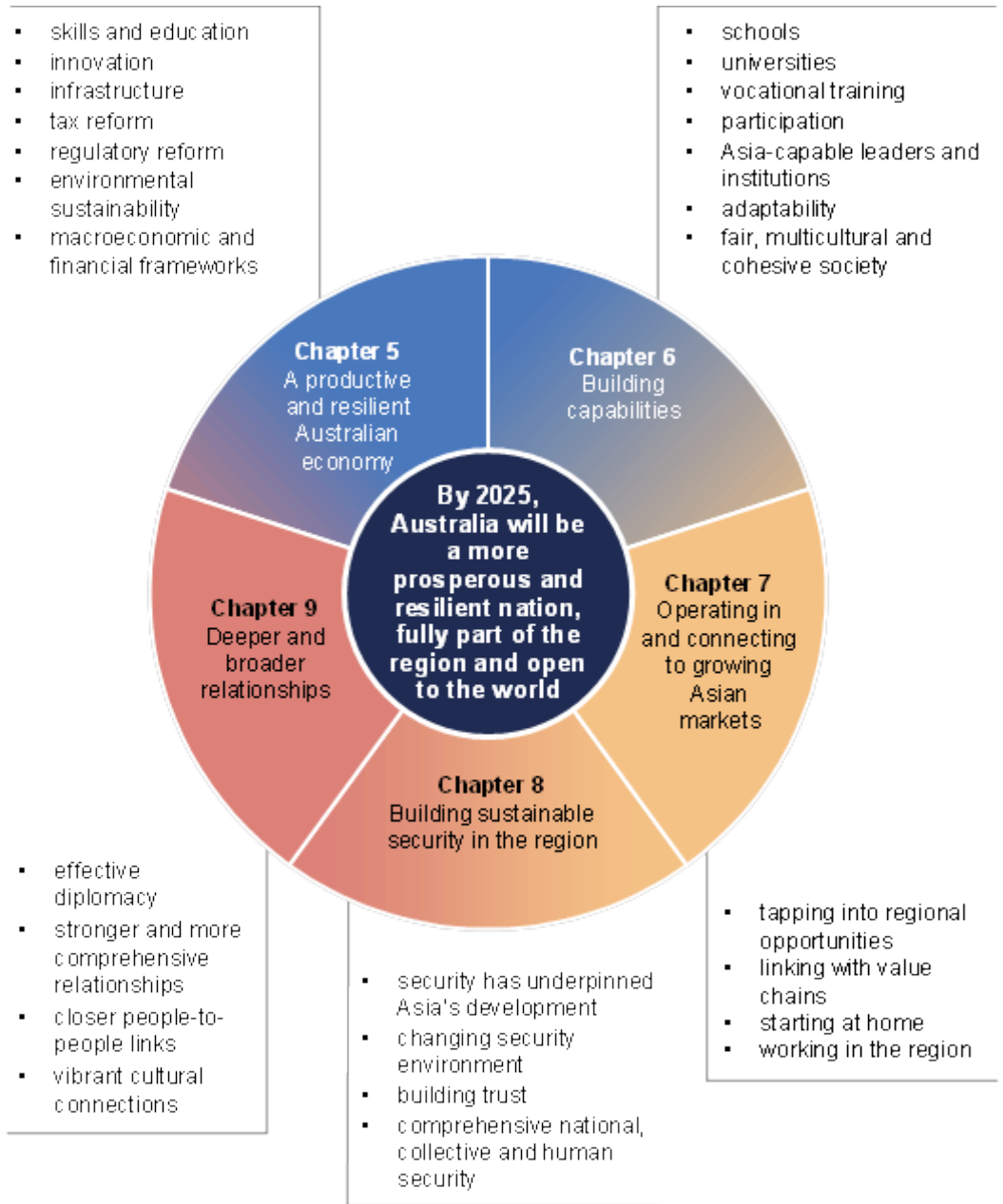


Figure 2: Roadmap to navigate the Asian century



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Grants for Seniors

Grants of up to \$20,000 are now available to deliver informal and accredited courses for Seniors, thanks to the Gillard Government's \$4.2 million Productive Ageing through Community Education program.

Parliamentary Secretary for Skills, Sharon Bird, today announced the opening of the first round of funding under the program, which is available to community groups and not-for-profit training providers. "Lifelong learning is vital to remaining active, healthy and engaged in the community," Ms Bird said. This program is about providing Seniors with more opportunities to take part in local courses tailored to their needs and interests." The Government made grants available in response to the 2012 final report of the Economic Potential of Senior Australians Advisory Panel.

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Learning Links

CONNECTING THE COMMUNITY WITH OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN

Learning Links is about people learning from each other. It's a friendly, relaxed way to learn one-on-one or in small groups at little or no cost. It provides opportunities for individuals to try new skills without the pressure of formal classes.

Learning Links is community-based, informal learning in relaxed surroundings that links new learners with volunteer tutors. It consists of a register of volunteer tutors who are willing to help people learn new skills.



To register as a *Learning Links* volunteer tutor applications are available at all library branches. Please return the registration form to [Community Information Centre](#) or by email to cic@townsville.qld.gov.au

Perhaps you would like to try crochet or learn to play the guitar or maybe you want to bush up on your writing skills. Let us know what you would like to learn and we'll endeavour to link you with a volunteer tutor.

For further information on *Learning Links* or to register contact the Coordinator, *Lifelong Learning, Townsville Library Service* on (07) 4727 9666 or email library@townsville.qld.gov.au.

CityLibraries Townsville, in partnership with Learning NQ and the Community Information Centre has developed this new learning program

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The Reading Hour

The Reading Hour will be our call to action for the National Year of Reading.

- Sharing a book with your child for 10 minutes a day
- Restoring some of that work-life balance by taking a break with a book at lunchtime
- Getting together with friends to read and talk about your favourite books
- Incorporating a reading hour in the school week

Our aim will be to establish the idea that everyone will benefit from reading for at least an hour a week and we will ask our National Year of Reading ambassadors to act as high profile role models.

We hope to hold this event in 2013 - watch this space.

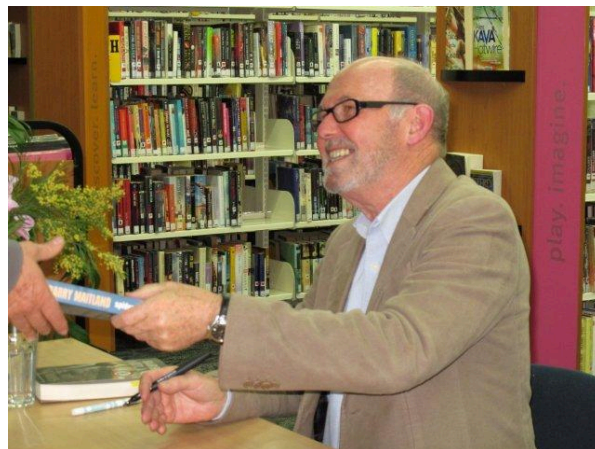
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Get Reading! At Moreton Bay

Moreton Bay Region Libraries are proud to be part of the Get Reading author touring programme. The programme is funded by the Australia Council for the Arts and sees some of Australia's best and brightest authors tour libraries and bookstores around Australia to meet their reading public. Arana Hills and Redcliffe Libraries hosted visits by fantasy author Kate Forsyth in March. Other authors we've been lucky to host over the last year include Toni Jordan, Barry Maitland and Graeme Simsion, author of the new romantic comedy *The Rosie Project*.



Kate Forsyth



Barry Maitland



Graeme Simison



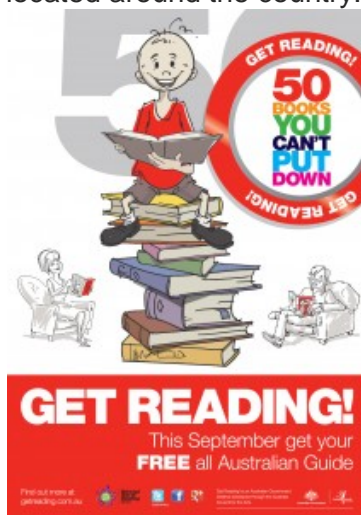
Toni Jordan

About Get Reading!

Get Reading!, formerly known as Books Alive, is Australia's largest annual celebration of books and reading, which encourages all Australians to pick up a book, put up their feet and get reading!

50 Books You Can't Put Down

Get Reading! is primarily a month-long, nationwide campaign focused on inspiring more Australians to discover or rediscover the pleasure of reading. Central to this campaign is the FREE *50 Books You Can't Put Down* Guide which includes 50 of the year's top reads. During the month of September hundreds of thousands of the FREE guide are distributed nationally via bookstores, libraries, events, and festivals located around the country. The Guide is also available free online.



Get Reading! Guaranteed: A Book You Can't Put Down and the Year-Round Author Touring Program

In July 2011 Get Reading! was expanded to include a year-round national author touring program to inspire Australians to pick up a book, year-round. This program is in addition to the usual campaign and tours one or two Australian authors to metropolitan and regional centres each month. The selected books are given the 'Get Reading! Guaranteed: A Book You Can't Put Down' silver sticker of approval to make them easier to locate in bookstores and libraries.

Visit our What's On page to see which Australian authors are on tour now, or check out which books have so far made the list.

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