

Quantifying the Value of Programming in Public Libraries: An Examination of Benefits, ROI, and Research Methods.

MINOR THESIS

Master of Information Management (Library and Information Management)
University of South Australia

Supervisor: Dr Diane Velasquez

This project has been approved by the University of South Australia's Human Research Ethics Committee (Ethics Protocol 204820)

Kaley Schelks

7 November 2022

(REVISED April 2024)

Abstract

All public libraries conduct programming. It is considered a core undertaking of a library. These activities engage the community, provide new knowledge and skills, give opportunities for creative inspiration, and can improve health and wellbeing outcomes. Programming is also a key method for bringing a variety of cohorts into the library, building trust and relationships, as well as breaking down barriers.

This research investigated the value of public library programming and how to most accurately measure and report on the benefits and outcomes. A mixed methods study was employed to understand how quantitative and qualitative data work together to best convey a complete picture of the worth of library public programming.

There has been only a few recently published, evidence-based research on this topic, especially within the Australian public library context. However, this is starting to change as library programming is being reported on in more detail within professional library organisations and State Libraries.

Ipswich Libraries' adult program participants were surveyed and interviewed to discover the overall benefits to individuals and communities. Opportunities for deep and lasting impact were investigated within these areas; community connection, improved skills and knowledge, health and wellbeing benefits, and occasions for inspiration and creativity. Community perception of the value and satisfaction in the program offerings were also explored.

Understanding the value of library programs is a complex topic which requires a nuanced and multifaceted approach. This research found that both quantitative and qualitative data are required to allow for a full understanding of the impacts on individual program participants, their community, and the library itself.

Through this lens these key findings will be discussed:

- Clear community and individual benefits with the top three benefits being new knowledge, increased social connection, and enjoyment.
- Programs offer definite opportunities for deep and long-term impact including life changing improved health outcomes.
- Ipswich Libraries' programs do satisfy community needs and that library members place a high value on programs.

This preliminary study significantly adds to the body of knowledge about the value of public library programming and will assist all stakeholders to make evidenced-based decisions.

Key Points for Library Programmers

[This section has been added post-academic submission. I have presented this research and the subsequent findings to various public library staff as well as local and state government organisations. These key points have been designed to provide practical evidence-based information and insights for those working in the area of library programming.]

The key points from this research will be synthesised and the crucial areas will be distilled (for more details and deeper insights see the full paper). It is hoped that this paper and the findings will be a starting point for library programmers and organisational decision-makers to examine their methods and look deeper into how programs are developed, and the potential outcomes for communities. I have included a list of best practises at the end of this section. These are learnings from this research and have come directly from the respondents of the surveys and the interviewees. The key takeaway messages for successful programming are to **listen to your patrons, ask more questions about their needs, delve deeper into your community's values, and aim to match your programming to their needs.**

Organisational benefits for both Ipswich Libraries and other Ipswich City Council initiatives became evident from this research. Improved visitation, increased borrowing and online resources usage were some of the benefits for the library. Those who engaged with library programs also said that they engaged with volunteering opportunities and other state and local government initiatives such as *Ipswich 60 and Better* program, *Galvanised: A Festival of Heritage*, and the *Creators of Ipswich Summit*. This research has shown that trust and goodwill towards the Council can be derived through library programs, especially the high-profile events. Libraries are a key public face of the Council and therefore can increase the trust, image, and relationship between the public and Council.

The top three benefits across all Ipswich Libraries' programming categories were learning *information/skills*, *social connection*, and *enjoyment*. Learning new information and skills through programs was central to people's needs and this would seem a logical response, as the main mandate of a public library is to provide universal access to information. Library patrons place a high level of trust in libraries and their staff. It is imperative that programmers respect this trust and offer quality programs whether from in-house staff or external presenters. It is important to research presenters' backgrounds to ensure that high quality programs are being provided. Where possible it is also good practice to use local talent. This will build community support, grow the pool of skilled presenters, and may offer opportunities for further marketing through the presenters' networks and platforms.

The other part of the program engagement puzzle is fun! The learning must be pleasurable. The third most cited benefit was *enjoyment*. It seems obvious that categories such as Inspirational Talks and Lifestyle programs would be enjoyable but interestingly, even the more technical Digital Literacy programs were rated as enjoyable. This enjoyment level is a crucial factor in the success of Ipswich Libraries' programs. Programmers must find a way to make even the driest of subjects fun and engaging!

Eased loneliness, *social connection* and *confidence* may have rated lower on the quantitative rating scales across most categories but during the interviews these areas repeatedly came up as also being very important to people. These three areas are deeply personal and can have a profound effect on an individual's wellbeing and have lasting community impacts. The fact that these areas have been acknowledged by the participants shows that these intangible benefits can have a great impact on the mental health and wellbeing of the community.

All six of the researched programming categories, Digital Literacy, FOILS, History Programs, Lifestyle/Health, Creative Workshops, and Inspirational Talks, have been shown to play an important role in providing benefits and meeting the needs of the

Ipswich community, however it was evident that Digital Literacy was the most important programming category. All public libraries provide access to technology such as computer terminals and Wi-Fi. However, research has shown that access alone does not facilitate participation in our technological based culture which has become essential in recent years (Wyatt et al., 2018). It is the act of purposefully targeting Digital Literacy programs which is allowing public libraries to become a key provider of improving and redistributing the skills required to bridge the digital divide and allow for higher social inclusion. Ipswich Libraries' staff have witnessed first-hand what other authors have identified, that older Australians and other marginalised demographics are facing increased isolation as more essential services are moving exclusively online (McCosker et al., 2020; Wyatt et al., 2018). This research has found that Ipswich Libraries' Digital Literacy programming greatly benefits both the individuals and the community through increased knowledge and skills, and better wellbeing outcomes. These benefits combined with the "financial accessibility" of free public library programs mean that public libraries can make a deep impact for those who are most at risk of being left behind (Wynia Baluk et al., 2021, p. 523). Hargittai et al. (2019) identified that people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and older people are overrepresented in the area of low digital skills and reduced technology access. This is reinforced in this paper as many Digital Literacy program participants stated that they could not afford to pay for equivalent assistance or would not know where else to turn for help. Technology changes have moved too rapidly in recent years. It is essential that public libraries provide this service to redistribute and improve skills thus enhancing social inclusion for vulnerable people.

For too long public libraries have shied away from understanding the value of their programs to their patrons. I believe that it is essential for libraries to attempt to quantify their programs' value through more in-depth and meaningful surveying of the participants. Most, public libraries do some form of satisfaction feedback surveys. I propose that adding just two extra questions (one quantitative and one qualitative) regarding the benefits gained by attending programs, public libraries would then have more insight into the value of their programs. I cannot definitively state what questions these should be. All libraries have different needs and requirements, but they should

delve deeper into the customer experience and program benefits than most customer satisfaction surveys currently do. Wong et al., (2006, p. 392) describe how program assessment is a “daunting task” but that libraries, “should not be deterred” and that setting some goals and making a start will lay a foundation for future research. This knowledge foundation would identify gaps and highlight strengths. This would also begin the process of documenting the value of library programs to the community and individuals. The feedback received on the benefits can also assist with providing evidence of the intangible benefits that are often overlooked or are difficult to quantify in reports to key financial stakeholders and decision-makers. It is crucial in this tight economic market that public libraries are able to demonstrate their value across all departments including programming (O’Connor, 2015).

It can be argued that meeting the needs of your community is the key to successful library public programming. The evidence from the Ipswich Libraries’ highly successful local history-based programs and the health series, *It’s Perfectly Normal...* demonstrate that when a library knows its audience and services their needs very positive outcomes can be achieved (State Library of Queensland, 2023c). It is crucial to understand the motivations and needs of your patrons. Further consultation with your community and keen observation of what is occurring locally, will inform how to best design programs to suit their needs (Barbakoff, 2015). Many authors have identified needs assessment as a key method to successful library engagement (Barbakoff, 2015; Wyatt et al., 2018; Wynia Baluk et al., 2021). However, the area of programming is rarely included in these discussions. I propose that a formalised user needs assessment and community consultation are both critical stages in strategic program planning and must be done with a view to offering identified benefits and value to the individual, community, and library.

Best Practice for Public Library Programmers:

These insights have been established from suggestions and comments from multiple respondents throughout this research. They have been highlighted as important for a quality experience for the program participants.

- Digital Literacy programs:
 - Regularity of classes for all levels,
 - Participants able to work at their own pace with no pressure,
 - The quality of the instructor's matter (trusted, knowledgeable, patient, friendly)
 - *Be Connected* is a high-quality online resource for digital literacy training.
- Across all categories:
 - Programs should be open to everyone and not just library members. Good programming will encourage attendees to become members through breaking down barriers and building trust.
 - How to become a library member should be built into every program plan. Discussions of benefits and methods of joining can be promoted (QR codes/forms).
 - Programmers should prioritise linking all programs back to the library collections and relevant resources (including digital).
 - Use community partnerships to develop program offerings. Building relationships with local organisations can enable new and increased sessions (National Impact of Library Public Programs Assessment, 2023).
 - Where possible plan programs as a series. This builds the library brand, gives increased marketing opportunities, and can reduce costs through economies of scale.
 - Use multiple marketing platforms, both hardcopy and digital. Meet your patrons where they are, know how to reach them (State Library of Queensland, 2023c). Social media and enewsletters are important but not everyone has the internet; printed flyers, brochures, and word of mouth staff recommendations are still very important to some demographics.
 - Take some risks. Do not be afraid to try something new or out of the box. Just ensure program plans are matched to customer needs.

Table of Contents

Introduction	10
Background	11
Ipswich & it's Libraries	13
Definitions	15
Purpose Statement	19
Research Questions.....	19
Expectations.....	20
Study Significance.....	21
Literature Review	23
Methodology	29
Study Design.....	30
Population & Study Sample.....	32
Data Collection.....	34
Data Analysis	37
Quality Control	38
Ethical Considerations	38
Findings & Discussion	40
Findings & Discussion - Benefits.....	41
Findings & Discussion - Deep Impact	56
Findings & Discussion - Value and Satisfaction	61
Findings & Discussion – Return on Investment & Methods.....	70
Conclusion	75
Limitations	76
Future research.....	76
References.....	78
Appendix 1	84
Ipswich Libraries' Survey Demographic Breakdown	84
Appendix 2	85
Ipswich Libraries Programming Questionnaire.....	85
Appendix 3	90
Interviewee List - Demographics & Programs Attended.....	90
Appendix 4	91
Online Survey List - Demographics & Programs Attended.....	91
Appendix 5	92
Program Categories & Attendance Statistics	92

Appendix 6	94
Lifestyle/Health Impact Likert Scales	94
Appendix 7	95
Inspirational Talks Impact Likert Scales	95
Appendix 8	96
FOILS Program Impact Likert Scales	96
Appendix 9	97
Digital Literacy Program Impact Likert Scales.....	97
Appendix 10	98
Creative Workshop Impact Likert Scales.....	98
Appendix 11	99
History Program Impact Likert Scales	99
Appendix 12	100
Alternative Service Providers	100

Introduction

This minor thesis centres on public library programming and its value. This is a broad, complex topic that requires a nuanced and multifaceted approach. To date, there is very little empirical evidence on the subject.

“It should be possible to assess the economic contributions that ... libraries make in their communities through the monetization of the psychosocial benefits that accrue to patrons that visit their institutions and participate in their programming. Today, there is no existing body of evidence related to this type of research. However, there are empirical reasons to believe that the psychosocial benefits created by libraries also carry measurable economic contributions.” (Institute of Museum and Library Services, 2021, p. 84).

Programming is considered a core business of all public libraries (State Library of Queensland, n.d.) and as such requires more academic scrutiny than has presently been conducted. Currently, the worth of library programs is made from inferences through studies about the value of public libraries generally. There is a substantial body of evidence to show that within their communities public libraries are highly valued, but can we say definitively that programming is also a valued service? Evidence-based library and information practice would say no. However recently, there has been encouraging developments with the impact of library programming becoming the centre of major studies within the State Library of Queensland.

Background

In recent decades, the role of public libraries has evolved significantly, moving from a repository of books and literature to that of a community hub which provides its patrons with a wide range of resources, i.e., computers, makerspaces, meeting rooms, and online resources (Public Libraries South Australia, 2020). Programming within public libraries has also grown from traditional activities such as story times and book clubs through to diverse activities including digital literacy workshops, robotics sessions, and high-profile author hours (State Library of Queensland, n.d.). Recent decades show a trend in both increasing numbers of programs/events and an increase in program attendance (excluding COVID-19 closure years) (Library Research Service, 2016; Public Libraries South Australia, 2020; State Library of New South Wales, 2021; State Library of Queensland, 2021).

According to the national public libraries' statistics there are currently 1,754 public library service points (branches, mobile and other lending outlets) across Australia. These libraries (in 2022-23) have conducted almost 355,000 programs with a total attendance exceeding 6.1 million (National and State Libraries Australasia, 2024). It is worth noting that COVID-19 closures greatly impacted programming statistics. Even though many libraries pivoted rapidly by moving their programming into an online space during peak COVID 2020-21 there was still a decrease of the total number of programs across the nation for the following years and a decrease in attendance (Note, some states, such as Western Australia were affected less by closures) (State Library of Queensland, 2021).

Today, public libraries are offering more programs than ever, however, total programming attendance numbers whilst growing significantly, are not yet back to pre-pandemic levels. Table 1 shows that across Australia program sessions have dramatically increased whilst attendance numbers are slower to bounce back. These trends were reflected regionally with Ipswich Libraries experiencing the same patterns until last year, when Ipswich reported strong growth in both sessions and attendance (see Table 2).

Table 1***Australian Library
Programming Statistics***

	Total Program Sessions	Total Program Attendance
2018 - 2019	273,041*	7,441,019
2019 - 2020	213,295*	6,425,311
2020 - 2021	148,591*	3,887,526
2021 - 2022	259,620	3,527,149
2022 - 2023	354,978	6,148,529

*No Victorian statistics (National and State Libraries Australasia, 2024).

All public libraries conduct programming and all use programming to primarily engage with their patrons. Programming is often seen as a method of connecting with community, providing skills and knowledge to patrons, giving opportunities for inspiration, and improving health and well-being outcomes (Barchas-Lichtenstein et al., 2019). Programming is also a key method to bring a variety of cohorts into libraries and therefore a way to build relationships and breakdown barriers (Fraser et al., 2014). Librarians worldwide instinctively understand the worth of programming, but where is the research to back up these anecdotal hunches? How do stakeholders really know what benefits or outcomes are being provided to patrons? As a public programming librarian, I have witnessed first-hand the need to justify our roles and impact within the greater library context. When asked to research the value of programming and to find examples of case studies which demonstrated a positive return on investment (ROI), I discovered a distinct lack of research within this area of librarianship.

Library research within the United States of America is highly proactive and comprehensive. Their population size and funding structure may be reasons for this. However, when looking to the USA for research around ROI or value of programming it became apparent that they too have very little evidenced-based studies.

Nevertheless, this is changing. The recently established National Impact of Library

Public Programs Assessment (NILPPA) is an American Library Association (ALA) project which is funded by a National Leadership Grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services. This research-based undertaking is documenting all aspects of library programming including the outcomes and value (National Impact of Library Public Programs Assessment, n.d.).

Globally, significant amounts of money are invested every year within public library systems and much of these funds go towards the growing trend of programming (Barchas-Lichtenstein et al., 2020). Generally, public libraries in Australia are funded by their local councils and state governments. Being publicly funded means that library administrators must be accountable for the expenditure and have a responsibility to show the impacts and benefits to their local communities (Aabø, 2009).

Ipswich & it's Libraries

Ipswich is a regional centre 40km west of Brisbane. It has a multicultural population of over 242,000 residents, who speak 152 different languages. Over the last five years Ipswich's annual growth rate has been 4%, with a forecast growth rate of 4.5% per annum over the next 15 years. This is remarkable especially when compared to Queensland's expected growth rate of 1.6%. It is an area with many young families with a median age of 33 (Queensland's median age is 38). Ipswich is a historical town with mining, industrial, military, and farming origins (Ipswich City Council, 2021; Ipswich City Council, 2022).

Over the past several years the Ipswich City Council has invested heavily in the library infrastructure. Four new libraries (Springfield Central Library, Rosewood Library, Ipswich Central Library, and Ipswich Children's Library) have been opened since 2018 (Ipswich City Council, 2021). Ipswich Libraries have been building a reputation of innovation with their new developments; from the success of their progressive library marketplace (themed, retail styled shelving in all Ipswich Libraries), to building Australia's first children's library, and the acclaimed Karalee Library Pod (Walker,

2021) Ipswich Libraries is developing a reputation in the GLAM (Gallery, Library, Archive, & Museum) sector for its ground-breaking endeavours.

Programming at Ipswich Libraries is progressive, having a dedicated programming team. Not all library systems are able to commit to having specialist programming staff, most libraries conduct their programming through general library staff. Before the pandemic, program sessions and attendance were strong, rising rapidly year by year. However, the COVID library closures and the need to pivot to online programs has impacted the statistics (see Table 2). There was a marked reduction in program attendance in 2021-22, mostly due to wariness by some demographics for returning in-person events. The general the appetite for attending programs at Ipswich Libraries has returned and exceeded the pre-COVID levels by 45%.

Table 2
Ipswich Libraries Membership and Programming Statistics

	Total Library Memberships	Total Program Sessions	Total Program Attendance	Attendance per capita
2018 - 2019	48,066	1,580	53,375	0.26
2019 - 2020	56,419	1,542	47,821	0.22
2020 - 2021	61,071	1,542	47,892	0.22
2021- 2022	47,545	1,804	43,102	0.19
2022 - 2023	51,316	2,456	77,589	0.33

(State Library of Queensland, 2020, State Library of Queensland, 2021, State Library of Queensland, 2022, State Library of Queensland, 2023, State Library of Queensland, 2024)

Definitions

Library Terms:

Public Library

It is difficult to find a concise, clear definition of a public library. Most papers define public libraries through their benefits, service offerings, and outcomes such as equitable access to information and resources, health and well-being improvements, as well as supported life-long learning (Public Libraries South Australia, 2020; State Library of Queensland, 2012; Stenstrom et al., 2019). Others give quite literal definitions:

“A public library is defined as a library building that is provided by a local council in accordance with the Library Act 1939, open 10 or more hours a week, operated by paid staff and offering a range of library services and collections.” (State Library of New South Wales, 2021, para. 4).

For the purposes of this paper, public libraries will be viewed as delivering a free, universally accessible community-based service which centres on resources (physical and digital), information, recreation, as well as programs and services. Public libraries in principle are supported by specific legislation and funded by local, state and/or national governments (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, 1994).

Library Public Program

Similar to public libraries, it can be difficult to define what a library program is due to the “diverse and complex variation of programs” (Mathiasson & Jochumsen, 2019, p.858).

“A public program is a service or event in a group setting developed to meet the needs or interests of an anticipated target audience. All libraries, regardless of type, have a public—the audiences the library tailors its programs to; the people that the library serves.” (Barchas-Lichtenstein et al., 2020, p. 573).

It is important to demonstrate how public libraries endeavour to meet the needs of their diverse communities through programming (Wynia et al., 2021). From the traditional to the innovative, there is a wide scope of activities which constitute public library programs. It is impossible to list them all, however, below is a comprehensive inventory of the types of programs currently occurring daily across Australian public libraries:

- Children's Programs
 - Story times, yoga story times,
 - Books for babies, baby rhyme times,
 - School holiday workshops and performances,
 - Coding and robotics, gaming clubs,
 - STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths) activities,
 - Teen tech programs, YA book clubs,
 - Manga clubs, homework clubs,
 - Summer Reading Club,
 - National Simultaneous Story Time.
- Adult Programs
 - Book clubs, and writing workshops,
 - Family and local history sessions,
 - Friends of the Library groups, English language groups,
 - Author hours, book launches, craft workshops,
 - Life skills workshops, health and wellbeing presentations,
 - Workforce readiness programs, resume help.
- Literacy Programs
 - Foundational literacy - reading and writing (children and adult),
 - Digital literacy,
 - Information literacy,
 - English as a second language literacy.
- Makerspaces
 - Digital design classes, 3D printing,
 - Gaming, VR gaming,
 - Specialist software workshops,
 - Podcast and recording studio access.

- Digital Programs
 - Tech Savvy Seniors, Be Connected,
 - Cyber safety classes, government website help,
 - Computer skills e.g., Learn Word, Excel, etc.
 - Digital photography workshops.
- Cultural Awareness Programs
- Small business assistance programs
- Art exhibitions
- Music and performances

(State Library of Queensland, n.d., Guide for programs section)

Economic Terms:

The following definitions are highly simplified and are viewed through a public library lens.

Return on Investment (ROI)

This is an accounting term which has been adopted by library valuation researchers to place a dollar value on the actual and perceived economic and social benefits of library users and their community. ROI or cost-benefit ratio is a common method to compare profits with expenditure and thus determine the worth of an investment. ROI is usually expressed in the following way; \$1:\$3.50, which means that in this example for each \$1 invested in the library, the community has benefited to the value of \$3.50. (Aabø, 2009).

Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA)

This is a preferred method of the Australian government to analyse the worth of a service and its provision. CBA takes into account the direct benefits (e.g., access to services and resources) and indirect benefits (e.g., improved literacy outcomes) of library communities. It also aims to place a dollar value on the economic, social, and environmental considerations of the investment (State Library Victoria, 2018).

Social return on investment (SROI)

The social return on investment method assesses three main areas: direct spending, direct tangible benefits, and indirect tangible benefits and by doing so aims to give a broader picture than traditional ROI (DeBenedet, 2018). This method is derived from CBA but focuses more on the stakeholder impacts (De Leon, 2021).

Contingent Valuation

This method aims to broaden the valuation of a library by adding variables such as willingness to pay, the value of time, or travel cost methods. This methodology is often used to ascertain the value of social enterprises as it includes the direct and indirect benefits (Aabo, 2009; State Library of Queensland, 2012).

Value

This concept can be difficult to articulate and measure. It can be expressed in accounting terms of ROI, CBA, or by statistics giving implied value or by perceived user value (Markless & Streatfield, 2013). However, library programming experts have identified that this 'ROI mentality' can be detrimental to effective programming that meets the needs of the community (Barchas-Lichtenstein et al., 2019, p. 17). In this paper, the key to measuring value and impact will be discussed through the lens of user experience and patron perception.

Purpose Statement

This research aims to investigate the value of public library programming and how to most accurately measure and report on the benefits and outcomes. In order to understand the balance between statistical (quantitative) reporting and describing outcomes (qualitative) a mixed methodology was employed. As such, qualitative methods were used to discover the outcomes and benefits for participants of Ipswich Libraries' adult programs. A complementary quantitative analysis of statistical data will inform the size and nature of the Ipswich Libraries' adult programming activities. Using both methods allows a more complete picture of the worth of library public programming to be established.

Research Questions

These research problems were examined within the Ipswich Libraries context:

- What overall benefits do Ipswich Libraries' adult programs provide to individual participants and their community?
- Does adult programming provide opportunities for deep impact within these areas:
 - community connection,
 - enhanced skills and knowledge,
 - health and well-being improvements,
 - occasions for inspiration and creativity?
- Does the Ipswich community value its library programming?
- Can adult programming satisfy community needs?
- How can qualitative and quantitative data work together to increase the effectiveness when reporting the value of library programming?

Expectations

Traditional hypotheses are usually not made within mixed methodology research (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007) therefore general expectations will be outlined; these have been informed by thorough examination of the literature and the feedback previously gathered by the Ipswich Libraries' programming team.

It was expected that:

- A mixed methodology will be the most effective way to research the impacts of library programs due to the complexity of the research problems. The research problems will examine hard to quantify attributes such as *value*, *benefits*, and *impacts* and therefore need to be viewed through both quantitative and qualitative lenses to give a full assessment.
- Library program attendees will find value and benefits in participating in programs and events.
- It is also expected that participants will show a medium to high level of positive impact within these four areas of adult programming:
 - Community connection
 - Skills and knowledge
 - Inspiration and creativity
 - Health and well-being

These expectations are based on high satisfaction levels and overall positive feedback which have been collected through post-event surveys by the public programming team after previous events.

This supposition is also grounded in extensive published research on the positive value and the well documented high ROI of public libraries in general. Inferences can be made between the value of public libraries and the value of programs within these libraries.

Study Significance

This study is important as a preliminary examination of how the value of library programming within Australian public libraries is studied and then reported to stakeholders. Programming is an integral part of the service offerings of a public library. The *IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto 1994* is acknowledged globally as the guiding principles for public libraries. This document lists twelve key missions for the core services of public libraries:

1. creating and strengthening reading habits in children from an early age;
2. supporting both individual and self-conducted education as well as formal education at all levels;
3. providing opportunities for personal creative development;
4. stimulating the imagination and creativity of children and young people;
5. promoting awareness of cultural heritage, appreciation of the arts, scientific achievements, and innovations;
6. providing access to cultural expressions of all performing arts;
7. fostering inter-cultural dialogue and favouring cultural diversity;
8. supporting the oral tradition;
9. ensuring access for citizens to all sorts of community information;
10. providing adequate information services to local enterprises, associations and interest groups;
11. facilitating the development of information and computer literacy skills;
12. supporting and participating in literacy activities and programmes for all age groups and initiating such activities if necessary.

(International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, 1994, p. 1)

Whilst programming is only explicitly mentioned within the last point. It is evident that library programming can play an essential part in *each* of these twelve core missions and can be an extremely important method of engaging with library communities.

Currently, there is little published evidence-based research on this topic, especially within the Australian public library context. In the current post COVID world, publicly funded organisations such as libraries are under a lot of pressure from funding bodies

to not only justify their spending and present a "...strong value proposition" (Queensland Public Libraries Association, 2018, p. 2), but to provide evidence-based decision making (Ryan & Cole, 2016). If there is no evidence to draw from, then how can the best decisions be made? This study will significantly add to the body of knowledge about the value of public library programming.

Literature Review

This literature review analyses the most relevant and recent studies related to the value of programming in public libraries and the methodologies that are used to report on it. Library valuation research has been the focus of many studies in the field of information science over the last two decades (Aabø, 2009). However, whilst investigating the current research centred on the value of public library programming it became evident that there is a dearth of evidence-based research on this topic (Institute of Museum and Library Services, 2021). Due to the lack of information on this more specific topic of library programming, the scope of this review was broadened to examine public library value reports (Mathiasson & Jochumsen, 2019). This literature review is using only primary resources from relevant government bodies, peer reviewed journal articles, and credible studies based on evidenced based methodologies within the last decade, unless seminal or influential. Firstly, the role that programming plays in each evaluation of the value of public libraries, from both Australia and overseas, will be reviewed. The appropriateness of each methodology used will also be considered. Lastly, the techniques that are employed to value and report on programming will be discussed in depth.

There is a plethora of research from around the world which focuses on the economic value, in particular the ROI of public libraries (as a whole). This research overwhelming finds that libraries offer a positive return on investment across all library sectors including academic, public, and school (Aabø, 2009; Public Libraries South Australia, 2020; Stenstrom et al., 2019; State Library Victoria, 2018; State Library of Queensland, 2012; Texas State Library and Archives Commission, 2012). Aabø's (2009) influential paper on libraries and ROI, conducted a meta-analysis of 38 previous quantitative studies. The majority of the libraries evaluated were public libraries based in the USA. All of these studies used a cost benefit ratio or a contingent value method. It was found that the average ROI for public libraries was \$1:\$4.50, however there was a wide range of variance across the studies with \$1:\$1.10 being the minimum and \$1:\$10 being the maximum stated ROI (Aabo, 2009, p. 320).

Across Australia, there have been several reports centred on the value of public libraries released from various state library organisations. All have found that public libraries offer high value benefits to their local communities. The Victorian report *Libraries work!: The socio-economic value of public libraries* used CBA to show that for “every dollar invested in public libraries generates \$4.30 of benefits to the local community” (State Library Victoria, 2018, p. 7). However, its focus was on demonstrating the quantitative value of public libraries by using economic terms to measure the benefits. Direct and indirect benefits are discussed but mostly in terms of the economic impact of libraries, such as jobs, and impact to local communities. Like many such reports, library programming is not mentioned as a high value adding library service. This is also an example of how most studies on library value have missed an opportunity by purely focusing on the quantitative data.

State Library of Queensland’s *Library Dividend* report, also using CBA, demonstrated that the cost-benefit ratio for Queensland public libraries averaged 2.3 (\$1:\$2.30) but could potentially reach 4.1 (\$1:\$4.10) (State Library of Queensland, 2012). This report is an excellent example of how both qualitative and quantitative data can combine to give a deeper insight to a complex research problem. It examines how libraries are used in Queensland and gives in-depth insight into the direct and indirect benefits for both library users and non-users. This report also gives a wealth of quantitative data that looks at the *usage* of programming, that is, the numbers and types of programs which are occurring across the vast state. It also alludes to economic theory by discussing the associated cost of programming, albeit in a very general way, “The delivery cost associated with these programs is limited to staff time and materials” (State Library of Queensland, 2012, p. 77). However, even with this depth of analysis, there is a missed opportunity to learn more about the value of programming within each case study. For example, question 15 in the *Library Dividend* report, asks what the patron does on a typical visit to the library and has 13 options for answers including borrowing resources, accessing the internet, and attending a program/event. A follow up question then enquires about the satisfaction levels of said library services, *except* programs/events (i.e., overall, collection, computers/Wi-Fi, facilities and meeting rooms, amenities, staff assistance, library website) (State Library of

Queensland, 2012, p. 98). It could be speculated that program satisfaction was excluded because it may be a complex question with multiple attributes, and it would deviate from the objectives of the original study. Nevertheless, considering that a whole section, *2.4 Programs*, is dedicated to information about programming across the Queensland libraries I consider that this omission reflects the lack of understanding of the need for value of programming research. In the report, section *7.2 Case Study Results – Library Programs* exemplifies how qualitative data pertaining to programming benefits, with locational context, can offer significant insights of how programming can benefit library communities. The report also addresses the difficulty of establishing an economic or cost benefit modelling for programs “...due to the significant number of assumptions needed for its inclusion. The assumptions required would result in high levels of inaccuracy” (State Library of Queensland, 2012, p. 76). The methodology and structure of this report is comprehensive, and it has been referenced in many books and articles, however, the data from this report is now over a decade old therefore the relevance to today’s position could be questioned.

State Library of Queensland (2023a) hosted *Future Libraries: Better communities stakeholder symposium*. The findings of two reports on Queensland programming outcomes were presented, one focused on digital inclusion programs and other on 0-5 years literacy outcomes via First 5 Forever. This symposium shows an evolving attitude by stakeholders towards library programming. Importantly, impact and benefits were key parts of these presentations and both qualitative and quantitative data were presented. The digital inclusion report employed a mixed methodology presenting statistics and facts which were supported by qualitative comments which gave a fuller picture of the case studies. It should be noted that return on investment was not reported on (Osman et al., 2022).

South Australia’s *The answer is libraries: The value of public libraries in South Australia* is the most recently released report on this topic, but is still four years old. This report also used CBA to attribute a cost benefit ratio of 2.8 (\$1: \$2.80) again this shows that public libraries provide a high value investment for their stakeholders

(Public Libraries South Australia, 2020). This report was primarily quantitative in nature and its aim was to prove the economic value of public libraries to the community and stakeholders. The direct and indirect benefits of users and non-users were examined. Programming was included with both direct and indirect benefits to library users, but it was only a minor focus of the survey questions. Interestingly, in relation to these three State Library published value reports, the South Australian report was the only one to ask about patron's perceived value. Question four asked, "How valuable are these services to you?" and then offered 11 options to be rated either, *not valuable*, *somewhat valuable*, or *always valuable* (Public Libraries South Australia, 2020, p. 35). The results showed that most of the services rated as highly valuable, with borrowing materials being the highest value service. Only 3% of respondents rated attending a program/event/activity as *not valuable* (Public Libraries South Australia, 2020, p. 21).

Ipswich Libraries publish an annual survey to understand how their services are being used by patrons and to gain feedback on user and non-user engagement. This is primarily a quantitative survey which focuses on usage and satisfaction levels of patrons. Programming as a service is in the top three reasons for people to attend the library and programs averaged between *somewhat important* and *important* as a service provided by the library (Ipswich Libraries, 2021). The Ipswich Libraries' programming team also conduct feedback surveys of program attendees. These are not published publicly but inform stakeholder reports. These surveys will be discussed further in more detail as they form the basis of the methodology of this research.

Another level of complexity to this puzzle is how best to report on public libraries and programming. Stenstrom et al. (2019) in their extensive review of 130 papers across two decades on the topic of the value of public libraries found that "an effective and nuanced approach toward identifying the value of public libraries must consider social and financial value together" (p. 360). It makes sense that a multi-layered approach such as this would be required in order to present a meaningful and rich illustration of the value of programming. DeBenedet (2018) provides an example of a paper which *does not* do this. To evaluate the social return of investment (SROI) of public libraries

in Ontario, Canada this paper uses only quantitative data which is based on over simplified formulas e.g., “Children Programming Formula: [Total attendance] x [Cost of service] = Economic Benefit” (DeBenedet, 2018, p. 16). The research concludes with a remarkable ROI of \$14.37. Not only does this ROI rate appear to be extremely high (when compared to the numerous other library value studies within this review) but the absence of qualitative data highlights a lack of depth and context which makes the study appear flawed and superficial.

A report on the value of Texas Public Libraries has placed a dollar value on programming/training per attendee per event, adults - \$8.00, youth - \$6.50, and children - \$5.00. By multiplying the number of participants per program per cohort the report gives a total value of the economic impact of these programs per case study (for example - total service value impact for Alpine Public Library in 2011 was \$23,970) (Texas State Library and Archives Commission, 2012). What was not explained was the rationale of how this dollar value for each cohort was formulated. Other library value reports coming out of the USA use a variety of methods to give a dollar value to programs. Some look at *cost of alternative use* (the cost incurred if a commercial service provider was used), others consider *cost of lost use* (the estimated value if the library did not exist). The dollar value placed on programs by various library systems appears to fluctuate quite radically:

- Indiana - \$4.00 per person per program attended (adult and child) (p. 179)
- Wisconsin - \$4.00 per person per program attended (adult and child) (p. 188)
- Philadelphia - \$10 per hour for literacy programs (p. 192)
- Philadelphia - \$30 per hour for small business programs (p. 193)
- Philadelphia - \$45 per hour for job seeker programs (p. 193)
- Ohio - \$25 per hour computer training programs (Texas State Library and Archives Commission, 2012, p. 198).

The above disparity in dollar values may be explained by the difference in localities of the libraries systems reviewed (urban, rural, different states) but also highlights the necessity for a more transparent and uniform methodology when conducting this type of research.

There is a recent movement towards evaluation of library programming. A new Danish exploration of the value of public libraries by Roskilde Central Library has given programming a central focus within their research. This ground-breaking paper offers a refreshingly balanced and comprehensive perspective to the value of public libraries. The study examines four areas of library services; collection, events, physical facilities, and staff guidance. An 'Impact Compass' was then used to measure the various types of library impact. The four parameters which informed the research were, *haven*, *perspective*, *creativity*, and *community*. Using these parameters, the researchers examined how the user experiences of the four library services areas were impacted (Roskilde Central Library, 2021). Within the programming context a very profound result emerged from this study. The two areas which align with programming, events and staff guidance, had the two lowest usage rates, 19% and 21% respectively, versus 89% for collections and 34% for facilities. (Roskilde Central Library, 2021, p. 9). However, these two areas also had the highest impact on a user's experience within the library. The events area was especially impactful, particularly for the *community* parameter, in which it rated higher than any other library service.

"Participating in events is not the most used library service, however. A fifth of library users have participated in an event at a public library within the past year. Nevertheless, it is the events that have the biggest and widest impact on the users who have participated in them. The impact of events is rated higher than average across 11 of the 12 impact parameters." (Roskilde Central Library, 2021, p. 27).

The second area which overlaps with programming was staff guidance. Staff are the face of libraries, this area rated as "...highly impactful on the users... in terms of the user's search for information but it also contributes to wellbeing, conversations, immersion, and new motivation." (Roskilde Central Library, 2021, p. 36). Staff are also shown to be an important part of the customer experience within State Library of Queensland's (2023c) Love Your Library market research report. Throughout the report, particularly within the qualitative data, library staff were consistently "...acknowledged for their warmth, kindness, helpfulness, patience and knowledge." (p.27). The library staff are integral to providing a high quality visitor experience as they make people feel welcomed and respected as well as providing valuable social connections (State Library of Queensland, 2023c).

Providing empirical, evidence-based data on the value and ROI of library programming appears to be a challenge for library valuation researchers. Evidence-based practice within libraries is not a new concept. It has been used by library executives for decades to assess systems and processes, and to help with robust decision-making (Koufogiannakis & Brettle, 2016; Thorpe & Howlett, 2020). A multifaceted, evidence-based approach using mixed method research that straddles both social and financial positions is required to fully understand the value of public library programming.

Methodology

This research adopted a mixed methodology employing both quantitative (numerical) and qualitative (descriptive) techniques. Ladner (2019) explains that quantitative studies contribute “scale and causation...”, whereas qualitative research provides the “coherence and participant focus” (p. 3). Each methodology has weaknesses and strengths. Quantitative is viewed as lacking context and in-depth participant perspective, whereas qualitative has been criticised for potential bias of the researcher and it is difficult to generalise the results due to the small number of respondents (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). It is intended that by using both techniques the weaknesses of each can be somewhat mitigated (Ladner, 2019).

A gap in the literature shows that providing empirical, evidence-based data on the value and ROI of library programming seems to be a challenge for library valuation researchers. The literature has given a trail of clues for the ways to achieve a complete picture of the value of library programming. As specified earlier by Stenstrom et al. (2019) the social and the economic values must be considered in unison. Furthermore, it has been established that *use* of the library services, as expressed through quantitative studies, does not give the insights and appreciation of the *value*, *benefits*, and *impacts* that the library services provide. This rich information is extracted through qualitative means (Roskilde Central Library, 2021). Therefore, employing a mixed methodology is the first part of finding a solution to this complex research problem.

The next step is to establish the most effective qualitative and quantitative techniques to draw out the required data. This study used the following methods: qualitative data will be extracted through surveys and interviews of adult participants of Ipswich Libraries' programs across a range of topics (author hours, digital literacy sessions, craft workshops). Quantitative indicators will be gathered via survey results and attendance statistics.

Study Design

This research was intentionally limited to adult's programs for several reasons, firstly to avoid previously researched areas. For example, there are several studies focusing on children's library programs and literacy programs already, and secondly to simplify this complex research into a manageable project within the tight time frame.

This study was informed by collecting primary data from attendees of Ipswich Libraries' adult programs. The data was only collected after receiving approval from the University of South Australia's Human Research Ethics Committee. In August and September 2022, I gathered quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously via surveys and interviews. The rationale for this mixed method approach is that the quantitative data and subsequent analysis will show the scale and overall position of the adult programming at Ipswich Libraries. The qualitative data and resultant analysis will enhance the numerical data by providing customer focus and real-world perspectives (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Ladner, 2019).

Table 3 shows a comparison and summary of the data gathering methodologies. The overarching approach will be *pragmatic*, as outlined by Creswell and Plano Clark (2007) because this approach focuses on the questions and consequences of the research, uses pluralistic methods of data collection, and is "real-world practice oriented" (p. 22). It is believed that by gathering the data via mixed methods that each technique will be made stronger through the following ways:

- Complementary - that the data collected from each style will deepen the understanding of the other.
- Developing - that the techniques will inform and improve on the quality of the other.
- Triangulation – the data will be validated through comparison (Bryman, 2006).

Table 3

Methodology & Data Collection Summary

N=47	Survey	Interviews
Worldview Approach	Pragmatism	
Sequence	Simultaneous	
Data Collection	August – September 2022	
Methodology	Mostly Quantitative	Mostly Qualitative
Primary Aim	To gather statistical information and general data related to how patron's use the programming services.	To gain a deeper understanding of program attendee perceptions of value and benefits.
Sample Size	Aimed 100 – Actual 47	Aimed 5 – Actual 15
Response Rate	353 Program participants approached 47/353 = 13.3%	
Sample Type	Randomised	Purposive sample
Procedure	Online/in person	In person
Administration	Emailed/QR Coded or in-person post event	Short (15-30 mins) Interviews post event

Population & Study Sample

The population for this research centred on Ipswich Libraries' adult program participants. Adults are anyone over the age of 18 years of age. It is most likely that survey and interview respondents were Ipswich Library members, because only library members can book into events, programs, and workshops, however, non-members can attend library events. Ipswich Libraries' members do not have to live within the Ipswich local government area (LGA) however most members do reside within Ipswich Council boundaries, with a 15% non-resident membership (State Library of Queensland, 2021). Understandably, most overlap between residencies occurs with the neighbouring LGA's of Brisbane, Logan, Somerset, and Scenic Rim (Ipswich Libraries, 2021).

This research aimed to have a study sample of 100 online survey respondents, however, only 47 surveys were able to be collected within the time frame of the study. Online feedback forms were emailed out with the standard feedback survey forms that Ipswich Libraries send out after each event. Some in-person programs offered a link to the online survey via a QR at the conclusion of the event. Paper copies of the survey were also made available to in-person program attendees. This was a particularly popular option for the attendees of the Digital Literacy programs. Many of this older demographic felt more comfortable using a pen and paper. These surveys were then entered into the online survey form by the researcher.

The sample will be random from the author's point of view; however, some elements may cause bias. Namely, most feedback forms are emailed/QR coded post-event therefore bias towards the more tech savvy attendees may result. It is hoped that the paper survey option somewhat mitigated this influence and achieved a more balanced sample.

Short semi-structured interviews were conducted in-person post-program. The author aimed to interview five program participants about their experiences as a program

attendee. However, fifteen people made themselves available to be interviewed. Purposive sampling which is a type of nonprobability sampling was used. This is an appropriate and preferred method as I selected participants from a variety of programs (i.e., digital literacy, creative workshops, history programs) to gain a deeper understanding of the benefits across the adults’ sector (Flick, 2007; Neuman, 2012; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007).

There was a bias of gender and age with more females than males, and more older people, 60 years and over, represented in the interviews (for a full demographic breakdown see Table 4). These numbers are in line with the demographics of the respondents of the Ipswich Libraries Survey Report 2020/21 (for comparison see Appendix 1) (Ipswich Libraries, 2021). The end of my survey asks participants if they would like to go in a random draw for a \$100 VISA Gift Card. Thirty people responded yes and included their email address to be contacted. The emails were recorded on an excel spreadsheet with a corresponding number, all the numbers were put in a random number generator website. The draw was overseen by my Ipswich Libraries’ Team Leader, Deannah Vieth as the witness, and the winner was contacted and given the gift card.

Table 4
Interviewee Demographic Breakdown

		Female	%	Male	%
Age range 40+		2	13%	1	7%
Age range 50+		2	13%	0	0
Age range 60+		7	47%	3	20%
Total	15	11	73%	4	27%

Data Collection

This research comprised of online/paper surveys and short in-person interviews (recorded and transcribed) of post-event participants. Each method had elements of quantitative and qualitative questions. The time constraints of this research and the complexity of conducting a mixed methodology project was eased by piggybacking off the current statistical data collection that the adult public programming team currently conducts after each program. This data is mostly quantitative and provides an excellent base line of usage and satisfaction levels of the programming services.

The first section of the survey is the standard questionnaire that is currently in use by the Ipswich Libraries' programming team. These questions are in line with the data which is required for reporting purposes for Ipswich City Council and State Library of Queensland. The following shows the types of statistics which the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) recommends that public libraries collect:

- Number of programs by target audience (e.g., pre-schoolers, primary school children, young adults, parents, pre-retirees, older people, avid readers, people with low literacy, people improving English language skills)
 - Number of programs by expected outcome (e.g., literacy and lifelong learning, digital inclusion, personal development and wellbeing, economic and workforce development)
 - Number of programs by delivery location/platform (e.g., onsite, outreach, online, partner location)
 - Attendance at library programs by target audience, expected outcome and delivery location/platform
 - Customer satisfaction with library programs by target audience, expected outcome and delivery location/platform
- (Australian Library and Information Association, 2021, p. 92).

In the most recent iteration of the national public library statistics it should be noted that the methodology for programming statistics has evolved to include more detailed and comprehensive data. Programs are now measured according to six outcome areas (literacy and lifelong learning, informed and connected citizens, digital inclusion, personal development and wellbeing, stronger and more creative communities) as well as the previously recorded categories of life stages. Public libraries are also now

reporting on the mode that programs are delivered, such as online, in the community, or by a partner organisation (National and State Libraries Australasia, 2023). These new statistical differentiations reflect the desire of the library professional bodies to report on the nuances of public library programming. It also reflects the changing nature of library programming trying to meet the needs of their communities via different platforms and through a wide variety of programming categories.

Currently, the only qualitative data collected in the Ipswich Libraries' programming feedback survey are suggestions for new program ideas or improvement for future events. This is contrasted by my research survey which was an additional survey section that followed on from the standard feedback questionnaire – *University Research Questions*. My survey has both quantitative and qualitative questions. These questions are designed to draw out information about the respondents' experience and delve deeper into how they feel about themselves, their community, and their connection to the library after attending a program. The three qualitative questions in this section are designed to extract information about the benefits gained, and the perceived value of Ipswich Libraries' programs. It is important to note that in the first section many questions are set as 'required' due to the results being linked to statistical reporting. In the second university research section only some of the questions were required. This did leave some gaps in the qualitative responses but due to the high volume of data collected in the qualitative interviews conducted, this did not adversely affect the results.

The platform which was used for the data collection was Microsoft Forms. This is an online application which is part of the Office 365 suite. It is intuitive and dynamic which offers a high quality user experience and makes constructing the questionnaire a relatively simple process. Appendix 2 shows the Microsoft Forms survey sample questions for both section one (Ipswich Libraries) and section two (University survey) of the online survey.

Interviewees were recruited via the survey. One of the last questions asked if the respondent would like to be contacted for a follow up interview, 17 people responded positively and ultimately, 15 were interviewed. The semi structured interviews were conducted at the interviewee's preferred day and time at Ipswich Central Library (other branches were offered but all preferred the Central branch). The interviews were held in the large computer training room and took approximately 15-30 minutes. All University ethics protocols were followed including signing participant consent forms, outlining the information on the participant information form, and following all COVID-19 safety precautions which are also outlined in the participant form.

The interview questions were based on the survey questionnaire. The quantitative questions were asked first to give baseline usage statistics and allowed time and space to build trust and rapport. The interview emphasis was on the open-ended qualitative questions from the survey. These focused on patrons describing their experiences, perceptions, and feelings after attending a library program. The author attempted to discover richer details by asking follow-up questions and using non-directive prompts that related to the individual's responses. The participants were asked for permission to record the interviews, which were then transcribed for the data analysis stage (Markless & Streatfield, 2013).

The surveys were collected in two ways, sent out as an attachment within the feedback survey which Ipswich Libraries send to all adult program attendees, or offered in-person directly after an event. The in-person option had a substantially higher completion rate and was offered either electronically via a QR code or through a paper copy (which was then entered manually by the researcher). The response rate was 13.3% as 353 program participants were approached in-person or emailed post-event and 47 responded.

$$(47 \div 353) \times 100 = 13.3\%$$

A full list of the interview and survey participants (using identifiers) are attached (see Appendix 3 – Interviewees, and Appendix 4 – Online Surveys). This shows basic demographics and which programs the respondents attended and discussed.

Data Analysis

A framework of triangulation was used to analyse both sets of data concurrently. This allowed for separate data analysis initially, with the quantitative being statistical compared and inferences made according to emerging trends. The qualitative data was then coded and developing themes were assessed and categorised. The next stage of analysis involved merging the data to answer the research questions. It is at this stage that the results either converged, transformed, or validated each other (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). This triangulation method allows for distinct but complementary data to be collected and then used to directly compare and contrast the quantitative findings with the qualitative discoveries. The aim is for the weaknesses of each strategy to be minimized and the strengths heightened, and thus to give a clear understanding of the research problems (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007).

One advantage of using Microsoft Forms is the built-in analysis tools which are automatically updated in real time. There is a convenient dashboard with visual presentations of the data such as graphs and charts. Each completed survey can be accessed individually, and the data can be exported in Excel. All of these tools were used to analyse and compare the data.

Both sections of the surveys have Likert scales, as these are a common way to understand the people's attitudes (Neuman, 2012). Section 1 centres on the attendee's satisfaction levels of the practical components of the session (i.e., presenter, session time, communications etc.). The second section's Likert scale examines the respondent's experience as related to the four areas highlighted in the research problems sections:

- community connection,
- improved skills and knowledge,
- opportunities for inspiration and creativity,
- perceived value.

Quality Control

Being mindful that some elements can cause bias, therefore strategies were built in to the process to maximise impartiality. For example, having paper survey forms to avoid skewing results to more technologically advantaged attendees. Another bias identified is that the response rate is affected by an attendee's motivation to complete the survey. Often only those with extreme impetus will give feedback (usually either very satisfied or dissatisfied), and this can lead to results being skewed one way or another. A larger set of responses to the survey was required to improve the reliability of the results (Neuman, 2012; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Two strategies have been used to improve the validity and reliability of the questionnaire. Namely, multiple indicators were built into the Likert scale questions in section 2 and some questions were reversed to mitigate response bias (Neuman, 2012). These strategies appear to have worked as only one survey respondent was found to have gone through and answered "somewhat true" to all the Likert scale questions, including the ones which were reversed, and therefore contradicted previous responses. This would indicate that this participant did not read the actual questions.

Ethical Considerations

Approval from Ipswich Libraries' management was received before any data was collected on behalf of this study. As employee of Ipswich City Council (ICC), at the time of the study, I had completed all ethics, privacy, and information management training required by council and followed all ICC privacy and information policies.

To be fully transparent, the only survey data used for this report was new data which had a declaration of intent attached to the surveys as per the ethical requirements of both the University of South Australia and the ICC. Permission was given for previously collected statistical attendance data which is owned by Ipswich Libraries to be used as part of the quantitative analysis (no attendee personal information was included).

At the time of the research, I worked for Ipswich Libraries as part of the programming team, consequently, the two roles of university researcher and public programmer needed to be separated when conducting the interviews. To assist with this, I did not wear an Ipswich Libraries uniform or lanyard during the interviews.

Participant confidentiality was highly important. The programming feedback surveys are already collected anonymously, and this was continued. The interviews were held in the computer training room at Ipswich Central Library. Identifying information such as names were not attached to the survey results, they had a basic identifier of 'Interview 1' (1-15) or 'Online Survey 16' (16-47). In line with current ICC privacy and information policies all paper surveys were shredded after the information is entered into the online survey by the researcher. The data and any documentation was stored as per the University of South Australia's Human Research Committee standards.

Findings & Discussion

Conducting a mixed method study adds an extra layer of complexity when writing up the results and subsequent discussion. Difficulties arise due to the large amount and divergent nature of quantitative and qualitative data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). It is necessary to present the information in a logical and clear way. To assist with this, the findings will be grouped by research question and then organised by program category. The findings will have the quantitative data presented first, and qualitative information and subsequent discussion will follow. The quantitative findings which are presented here are based on the results of 47 individual surveys, 15 of these respondents also participated in a short in-person interview. These interviews formed the basis of the qualitative data which will be examined further and aim to give a depth of perspective.

The post-event surveys and interviews were conducted after selected adult programs. The participants from each category of program were chosen to offer a range of experiences and demographics, however there were more women than men, and more older people, 60 and over, who came forward to be interviewed. These statistics are representative of the breakdown of patrons who traditionally attend Ipswich Libraries' adult programs. It should be noted that the interview questions were initially limited to the individual's experience of a single Ipswich Libraries' program. However, while answering the interview questions many participants remembered past library programs which they had participated in and they volunteered information about benefits and experiences from those events as well. A list of these further commented on programs/events has also been included. See Appendix 3 and 4 for the full list of programs that were attended and discussed. This 'reminiscing' over past programs gave an unintended and unexpected insight into the long-term impacts that programs can have on individuals, and the community.

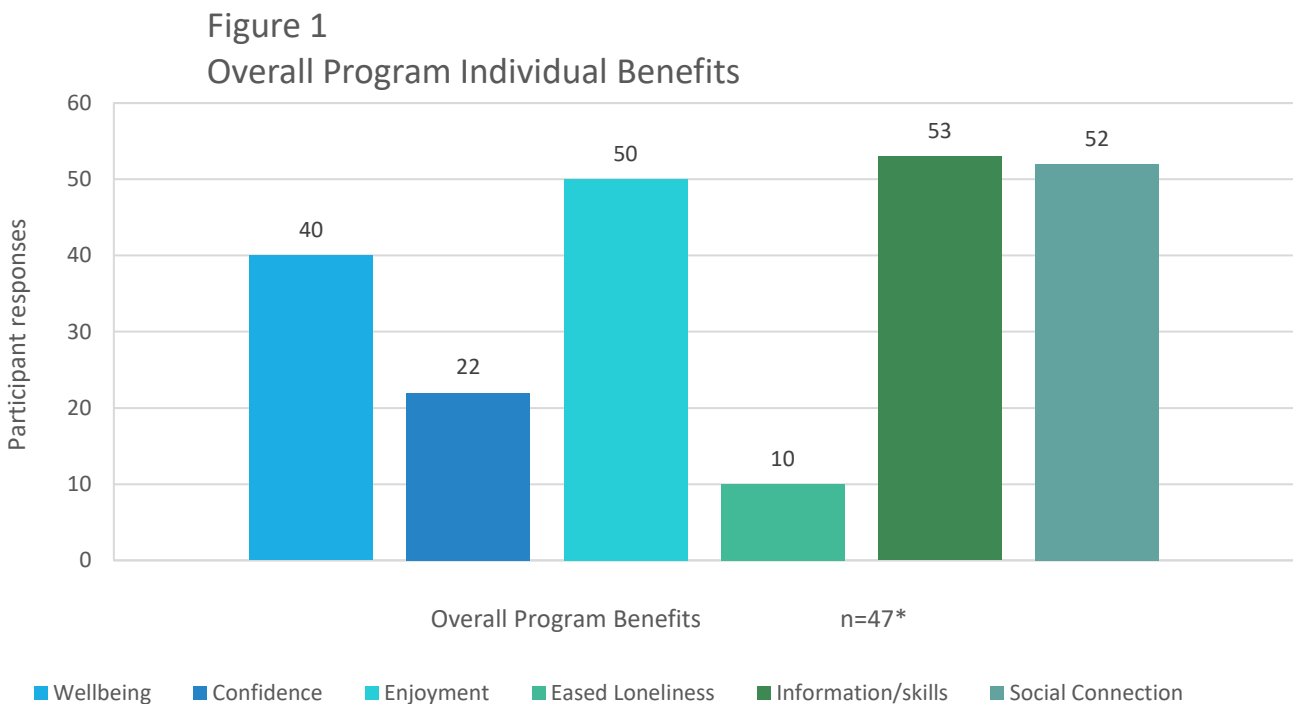
Note: Whilst 47 people ($n=47$) completed the survey many listed attending multiple events and programs and referred to them throughout their comments, therefore some of the totals exceed 47.

Findings & Discussion - Benefits

This research aimed to examine what overall benefits Ipswich Libraries’ adult programs provide to individual participants and their community?

This is a complex question, especially when examining the numerous categories of programs that Ipswich Libraries run. Limiting this question to only adult programs still presented a wide range of undertakings and therefore a diverse range of benefits to the individual and community.

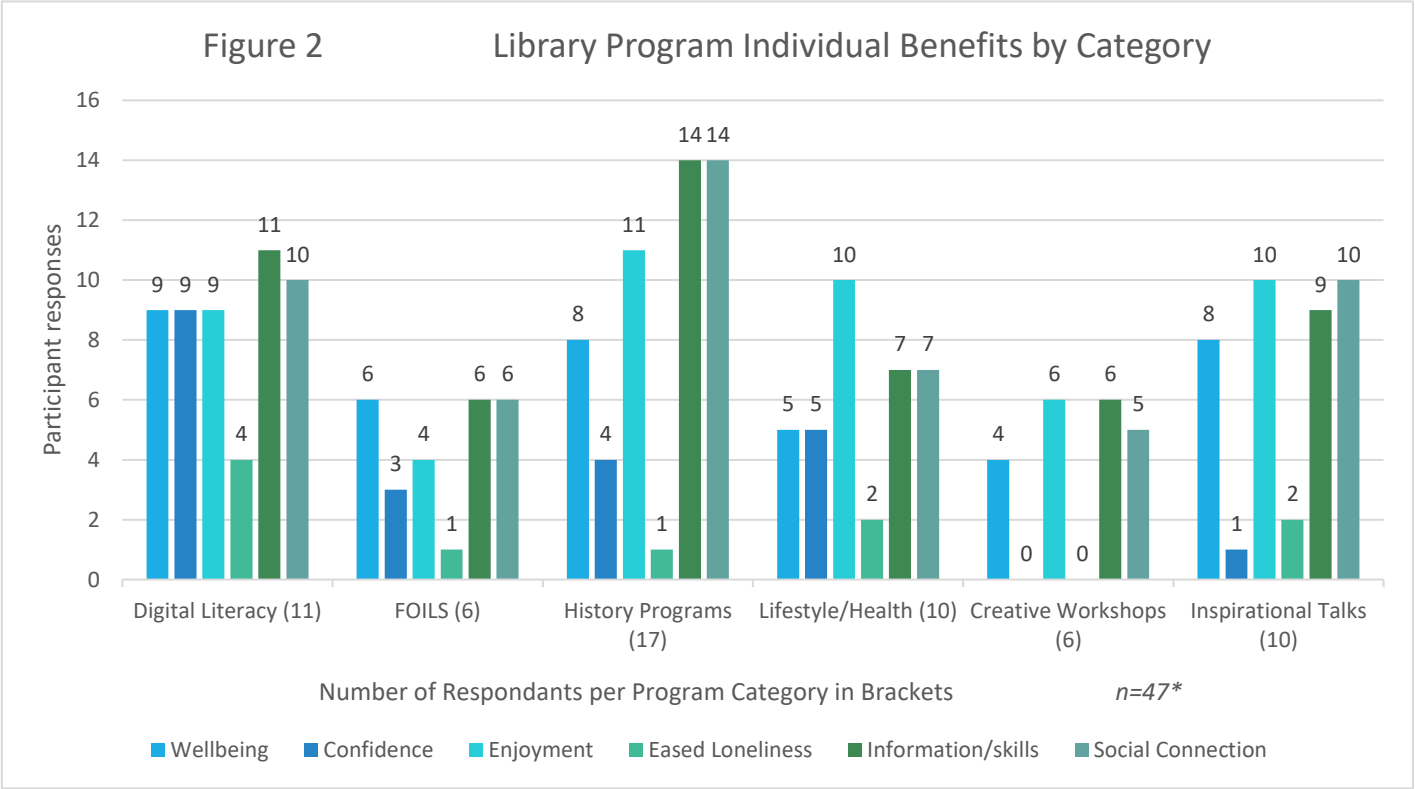
Individuals were asked to articulate explicit benefits from attending the programs (see Figure 1 for Overall Program Individual Benefits). The top three benefits across all categories were learning *information/skills* (53 comments), *social connection* (52 comments), and *enjoyment* (50 comments).



*Please note: 47 people participated in this survey however many participants listed attending multiple programs, therefore the totals exceed 47.

Information/skills was the most common benefit reported with four of the six categories (digital literacy, Friends of Ipswich Libraries (FOILS), creative workshops, and inspirational talks) having 100% of respondents reporting they learnt new knowledge (see Figure 2 for benefits by program category).

However, *eased loneliness* rated low across all the categories (with only one or two responses per category), but there were double the responses for digital literacy than any other program category. There may be a stigma surrounding the term ‘lonely’ because *social connection* and *eased loneliness* are similar outcomes and people were more likely to tick the *social connection* box.

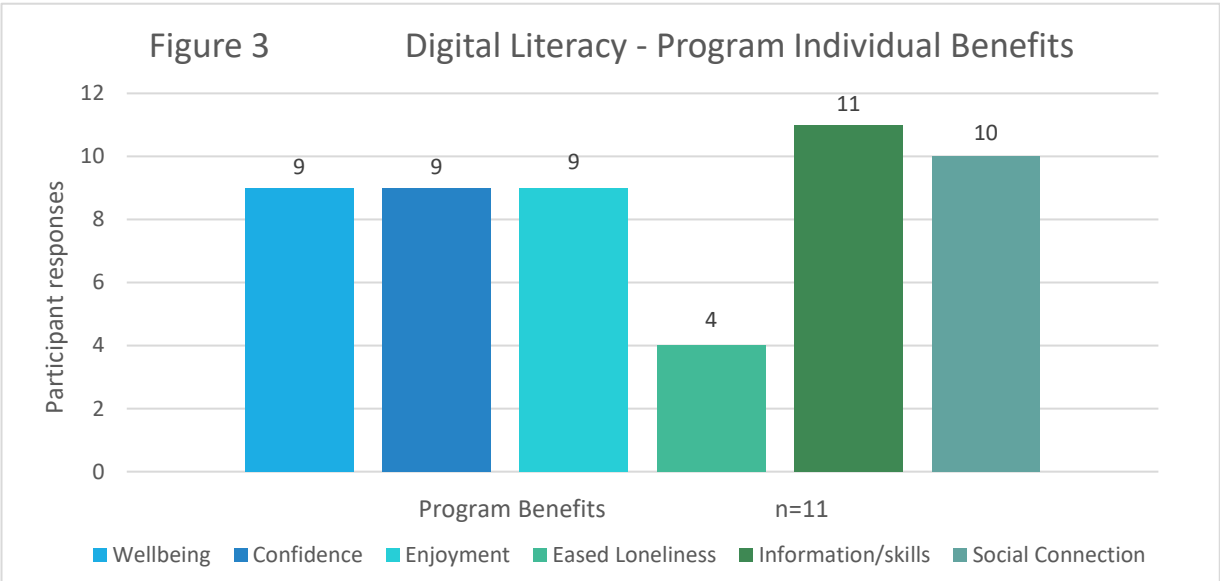


Digital Literacy

There were eleven survey participants (including five interviewees) who related their experiences of attending Digital Literacy programs including the Be Connected - Tech Help, Digital Devices, and Learn Digital – Deep Listening Online with Oscar Trimboli. The digital literacy patrons who were interviewed are a mix of male and females who ranged from highly skilled ex-professionals/retirees wanting to enhance and maintain

their existing tech skills, to those with extremely low-level digital skills who are trying to manage life in the digital age, many of whom feel left behind already.

The higher skilled people are wanting to learn more about topics such as password management, internet scams, and how to get the most out of their devices. The lower-level people often come in with hand-me-down smartphones or iPads and want to learn the very basics such as how to send a text message or how to connect to the internet. Ipswich Libraries has been conducting digital literacy programs for many years. These programs were introduced to address an identified need to assist patrons to bridge the ‘digital divide’. This term was coined to explain the disparity of technology access and use by certain demographics including older people and lower socio-economic groups (Hargittai et al., 2019).



The quantitative data for digital literacy shows that it was the category which had the highest ratings across all the benefits (see Figure 3). The *eased loneliness* benefit was lower rated (4) than the other benefits, but this was still double the rating of *eased loneliness* in the other categories. These findings reinforce the fact that many people who struggle with technology can feel socially isolated and this was exacerbated during the recent pandemic (Wyatt et al., 2018).

New *information/skills* rated the highest benefit in the quantitative data and the qualitative comments support this notion. The below comment also highlights the frustration that many older Australians feel with technology use:

It's [Be Connected] given me more skills; it's unlocked a lot of mysteries when it comes to computers. I bought a bloody computer and I had to turn around to find somebody to teach me how to use the damn thing. (Interview 7)

I also have had problems finding any information and training on the Apple iPad which I bought about 3 years ago and don't feel that I use it to the full extent and this course gave me a lot of insights and now I feel more confident looking around on it [...] I mean not that I really need extensive information technology use these days but it's useful to know what's out there particularly with all the scam security and things like that everybody has to be aware of. (Interview 11)

Improved confidence rated highly both in the quantitative and qualitative evidence.

One participant elaborated on their confidence and social connections:

I didn't hesitate on signing up for the program to become more computer savvy and I am so glad I did because it's given me newfound confidence to navigate my way online (e.g., filling out this survey would never of happened previously) and I've made some good friends also. Thank you, Ipswich library keep up the good work. (Online survey 16)

Lack of confidence and a fear of technology seem to be a major motivation for attending these Digital Literacy programs. One respondent commented that even buying a new microwave made them worry about what digital skills they would need to work it:

I think it's great that people of our age can now be connected or begin to be connected [online/with technology] and understand what we're doing, instead of being in a complete muddle everyday [...] it's always so tricky, they ask for passwords, and that in itself is intimidating, you feel one false move and you've lost everything! [...] I was pretty scared [of the new microwave], I thought it's going to ask for more passwords or something, so that's where we're at! (Interview 5)

Most (9 out of 11) respondents reported feeling a sense of wellbeing after attending a Digital Literacy program. It is not uncommon for attendees to voice their nervousness, frustration or anxiety around using technology. This was especially exacerbated during the recent COVID-19 crisis with hundreds if not thousands of older people turning to Ipswich Libraries for technical assistance with QR readers, using MyGov, and finding their digital vaccination certificates. The early days of the pandemic exposed the vulnerability of cohorts with limited technology access and skills. It also highlighted the important role that public libraries play in supporting the wellbeing of their communities (Wynia Baluk et al., 2021). It has been identified that as more essential services move online older generations are facing more difficulty accessing services and are feeling increasingly isolated (Wyatt et al., 2018). Interviewee 5 talked about leaving the weekly Be Connected sessions “walking on air” and feeling “all soothed and happy after the session” which demonstrates the wellbeing and feeling of relief which attendees report when they learn a new skill on their smartphone or have a simple issue fixed on their device. Online Survey 16 respondent stated that “All the staff were super friendly and despite being rather nervous and anxious at first, they made me feel welcome and relaxed like we were old friends already.”

Digital literacy programs are providing benefits to both the individual and community. One clear community benefit is that peer-to-peer guidance is occurring via skills transference. Those attending digital literacy programs are then going on to share their learnings with friends and family members. Interviewee 11 is one of the most digitally literate participants who wants to maintain their knowledge and skills, they are also a University of the Third Age tutor:

Because I am a little bit au fait with technology, I am asked a lot by my contemporaries for help [...] because a lot of particularly older people and I include myself in that to some extent but older than me, in their late seventies eighties they haven't grown up with technology and they really don't know where to look for all this [...]. Well, I think it's confidence building for me to feel that I can tell them [...] where to go to get information [the library].

Ipswich Libraries (as a whole) also derive positive outcomes from programming. These include greater visitation statistics, increased borrowing, heightened rapport and trust with library staff, and more use of online resources. The evidence from this study shows that Ipswich Libraries' digital literacy programs not only brings in new and diverse patrons but also gives them the skills to use the library's digital resources. The programming team actively promotes the Ipswich Libraries' *Virtual Branch* and teaches people how to search, check out, and use eBooks, eAudio books, and how to download and use the Ipswich Libraries' App:

Well, I just learnt how to check out an eAudio book, because I was just telling the other girl how I always go out of here walking on air and I forget to get a book! So, she's shown me how to use the online books. It's so good, I love it, I feel so included. (Interview 5)

The Ipswich Central Library Branch has become a hot spot of senior digital literacy learning. This can be attributed to an older demographic living in the surrounding area and with the word-of-mouth recommendations amongst users of the programs:

I've told quite a few people about Be Connected and told them to get on and have a look [...] at least if they know it's there and they can ask somebody, and I can say, well, go to the library because I know that there is that service. (Interview 11)

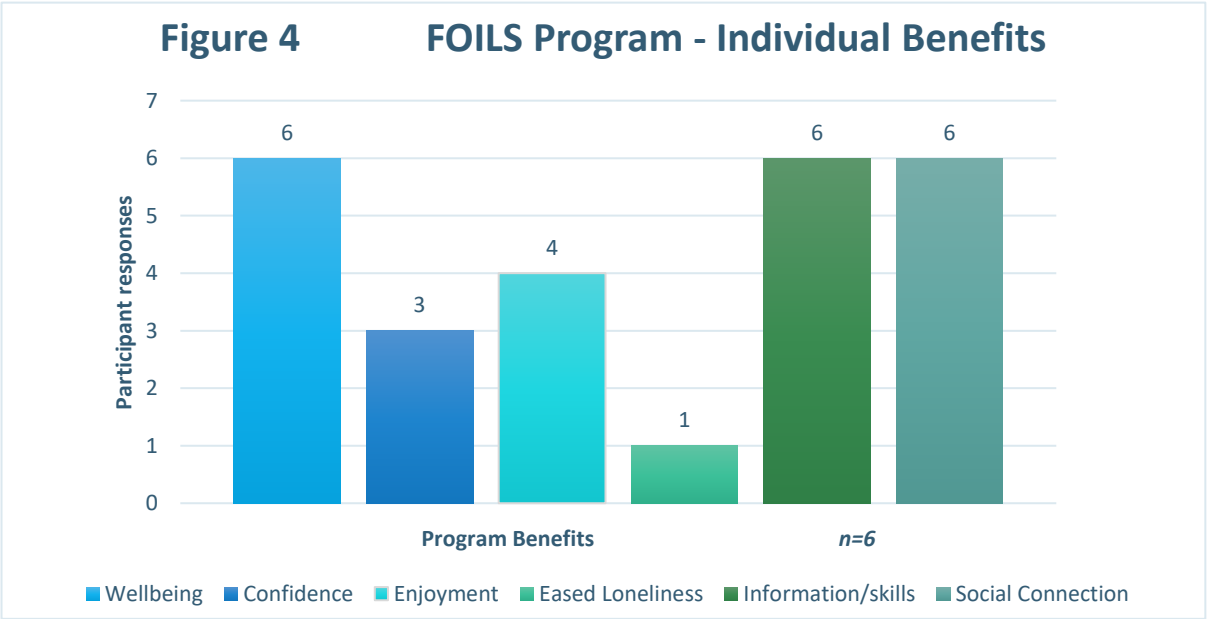
Friends of Ipswich Libraries (FOILS)

The six survey participants (including four interviewees) who shared their experiences about being members of the Friends of Ipswich Libraries group and their associated programs were all women in aged 60+ or 70+ years. FOILS differs to the other program categories as it has both social and philanthropic aspects. The FOILS fundraise for children's literacy programs such as Books for Babies (All babies born in Ipswich receive a bag with a board book and other literacy-based resources for parents.) and Baby Rhyme Time (BRT), all families who participate in this 4-week library program receive a graduation bag with a board book and other resources. The

FOILS members also volunteer their time to pack the bags and present the BRT bags at the last program session.

These two programs provide a definite benefit for the Ipswich community and for the young families who receive them. The FOILS social events which are used to fundraise occur regularly throughout the year and include Slice of Life (talk and afternoon tea), Trivia Nights, Theatre Nights, Lunches, and High Teas. All these programs are jointly organised between the adult’s programming team and the executive FOILS members.

Quantitatively, three benefits were rated equally important, *wellbeing*, *information/skills*, and *social connection* (see Figure 4 for FOILS Program Individual Benefits).



The qualitative data helps to explain how the individual benefits of *wellbeing* and *social connection* can be linked to the community benefits which come from the work that FOILS does. Most FOILS members are retirees and enjoy the both the social and charitable aspects. Interviewee 3 stated that “I like them equally”. Two active FOILS members describe what they get out of being a member:

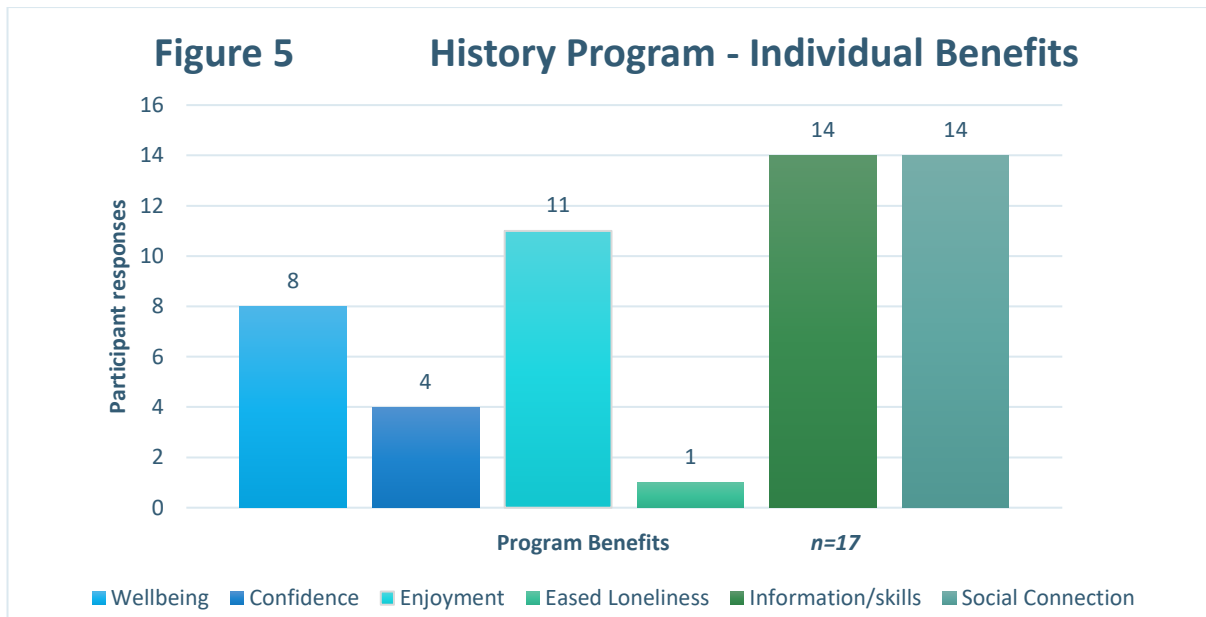
I discovered FOILS and made new friends. I love books, I love children, I participate in wonderful programs (Baby Rhyme Time). It's important that children are exposed to books early (Books for Babies). (Online Survey 36)

I do think a lot of people do appreciate what the library is doing and that comes across when we do Baby Rhyme Time, they say thank you very much, we really appreciate what you're doing [...] one mother the other day said, "it's the highlight of our week". (Interview 4)

All FOILS members who were interviewed expressed a high level of pride with being involved in improving the Ipswich community, and it seems that their social identity is tied to the volunteering that they do. Volunteering opportunities have been identified as being beneficial for the individual, the community, and the organisation (Colibaba et al., 2019; Wynia Baluk et al., 2021). Some studies have highlighted the delicate balance between the time required by library staff to manage their volunteers, in this case, the adult's programming team, and the outcomes achieved by the volunteers (Casselden et al., 2019). The qualitative and quantitative evidence from this study shows that the increased wellbeing from active social inclusion combined with the altruistic outcomes which benefit the young families of Ipswich that the FOILS program is highly beneficial with strong community impacts.

History Programs

There were 17 survey participants (including six female interviewees) that related their experiences of attending Ipswich Libraries' history programs. This large sample can be attributed to two things; history programs are very popular and draw much interest from library patrons (State Library, 2023c), and the timing of the data collection. The data collection took place in September during *Galvanised – A Festival of Heritage*. This 10-day Ipswich City Council festival partners with the library and other cultural institutions to offer a variety of historical programs. In 2022, the offering included Limestone Frolic (a heritage bush dance), Preserving Historical Photographs and Documents Workshops, and Local and Family History Research Talks.



When asked about the explicit benefits from these historical programs, *information/skills* and *social connection* were the main ones followed by *enjoyment* (see Figure 5). It is understandable that knowledge would be a key benefit, but the community connection is further explained by the qualitative statements, for example “I got to sit there with my sister and watch it together and it was as much the getting together as the content” (Interview 12). Other comments show the depth of connection:

I feel more connected to people in my area because I do not know anyone personally who has renovated a house of such heritage, so now I know more about these people and their houses which belong to my community. (Online survey 20)

It gave me an opportunity to learn about the history of the local area and gave me another opportunity to dance. It is fabulous that the library provides such events to broaden the general knowledge of the community. In this case, dancing brings a community together. (Online survey 30)

Library programs have been shown to provide links to community and improve social capital for immigrants and people new to an area (Khoir et al., 2017). In this study,

several people also demonstrated that Ipswich Libraries' history programs provide local insights and social inclusion to those who have moved into the area:

[I've learned] a bit more knowledge about the history of the area and because I'm not from Ipswich so everything I've learned about ... the Foot's, the Cribbs and all the old families and everything local. (Interview 12)

I do love them [library programs], they are fascinating, have an interest in the history of any city that I come to live in and Ipswich is no different. I love Ipswich's history, I love learning more about it's built history, it's old buildings. I myself live in a heritage house. (Interview 15)

Many of the Ipswich Libraries' programs also reinforce civic pride by featuring local presenters (artists, authors, experts in their field) and by providing knowledge of local history for example the Chasing our Past – Great Houses series:

I go walking in Ipswich, just to go and look at houses. I've actually wanted to photograph a lot of them to send to my friends down South, just to say this is where I live. These magnificent old homes! (Interview 12)

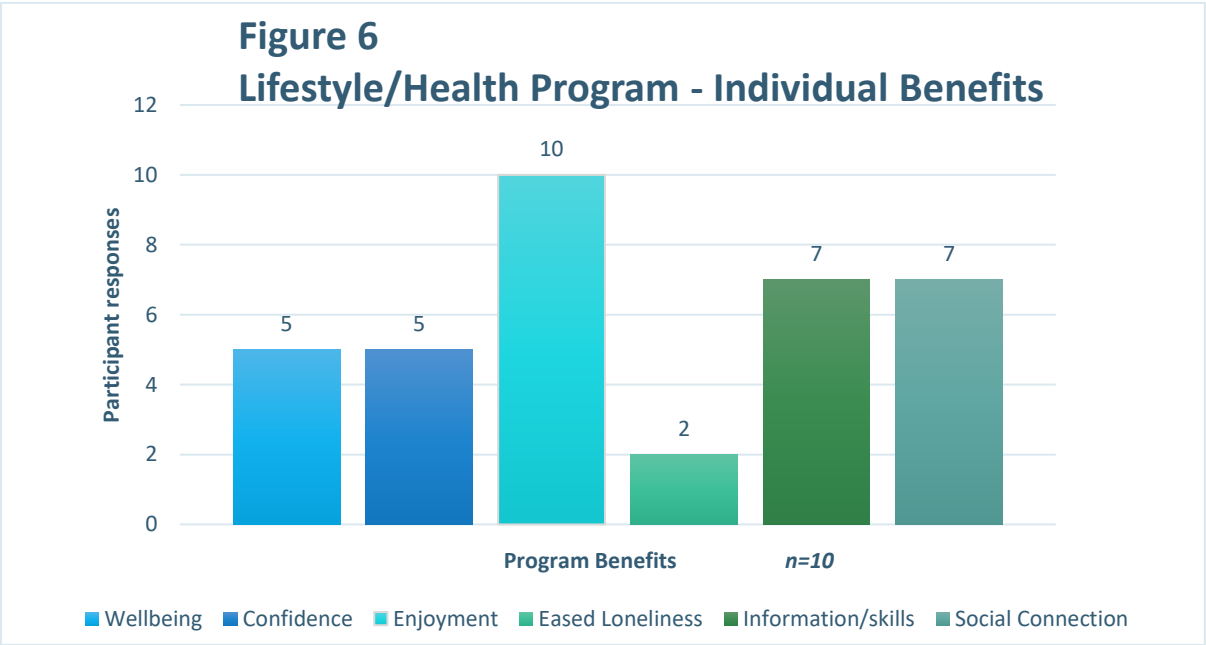
The old houses and buildings of Ipswich are a beautiful asset, and this program is a great way to showcase this feature to the wider community. (Online Survey 21)

Lifestyle/Health

There were ten survey participants (including three interviewees) who shared their experiences of attending lifestyle/health programs including the It's Perfectly Normal... Series (Periods and Menopause), the Pen-Pal Program, and the Celebrate Series (Japan). Two of the interviewees were women in their early 40s with school aged children. They attended both It's Perfectly Normal... online programs. The third interviewee was a retiree in her 60s who participated in the Celebrate Japan event.

The Pen-Pal Program and It's Perfectly Normal... are innovative and somewhat unusual programs for a public library to run. The Pen-Pal Program was developed through a partnership with five public libraries in the USA. Registered participants were given stamps and a stationery kit and were then matched up with American participants with the aim to become pen-pals. It was unexpectedly popular with over 200 people in Ipswich registering for the program.

It's Perfectly Normal... (Periods and Menopause) was identified as an important women's health series due to the high number of women who attend Ipswich Libraries' programs and the library in general (see Appendix 1). This series of health programs was considered somewhat risky due to the taboo nature of the topics, however the overwhelming positive feedback proves that this community appreciates their library tackling some more meaningful topics.



The Celebrate Series is a popular cultural program that highlights a chosen demographic segment (based on ABS statistics of the Ipswich population), and celebrates different cultures through food, dance, and traditions. Until recently this was a children's focused program. It now alternates from a family format to an adult's evening program. Some recent examples have been Celebrate First Nations (bush tucker and performer - for families), Celebrate Japan (Taiko Drumming - for adults).

The qualitative data shows that 100% of respondents (ten out of ten) stated that *enjoyment* was the main benefit of these programs, followed by *information/skills* and *social connection* (see Figure 6). However, the qualitative data shows that *confidence* and *social connection* were very important benefits. A Pen-Pal Program participant demonstrates how innovative programming can really engage a new patron to try library programs:

This has been the first library program I have participated in, but I'd love to be involved in more! I've been a bit nervous to try them in the past as didn't want to go alone but I think I should just go for it next time as I feel a great sense of worth and also pride to be picked. I get excited telling people I'm a part of the program! (Online survey 44)

Another Pen-Pal Program participant said “I have enjoyed making a new friend from the pen-pal program. I have participated in other library programs which have imparted new information” (Online survey 45). Interviewee 13 stated that, “It's good just to be in a space with other women [...], with likeminded people”.

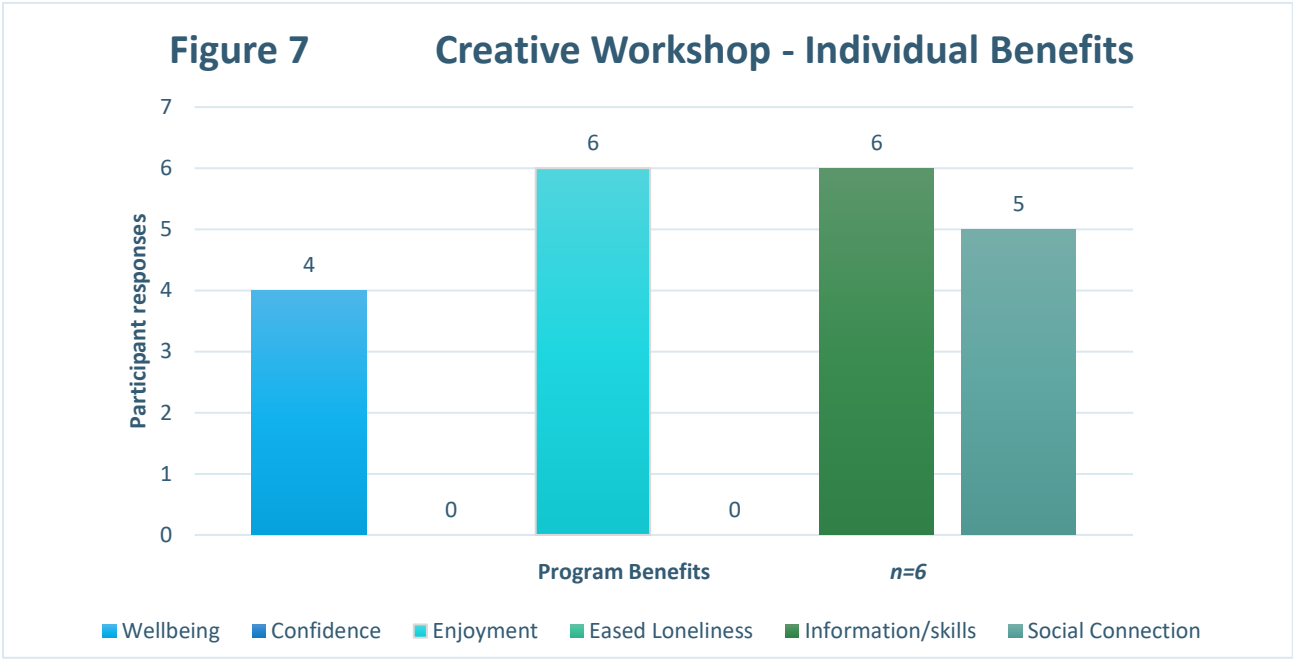
The Celebrate Japan participant related that she enjoys the inclusiveness and often brings a friend with her to these types of library events:

We went to the Japanese drums which was absolutely unbelievable! Who would have known... those sort of things are very enlightening, you know, it opens people's eyes, it really does. He [the instructor] invited us all to go and join the club, well I'm not sure we're going to do that, but we had a go ... and it was something that you wouldn't normally of thought “oh I'll go join a Japanese drum group” (Interview 11)

Public libraries have been identified as being “uniquely positioned” to provide free, convenient, and high-quality health literacy programs (Luo, 2018, p.233). This study found that libraries are a trusted organisation and as such the information offered is seen as more credible than other information alternatives. Interviewee 9, who attended both It's Perfectly Normal... programs compared the Ipswich Libraries health programs to other service providers such as podcasts and stated that “this was a medical health practitioner talking, this one that you did was much more valuable.”

Creative Workshops

There were six survey participants (including four interviewees) that gave their opinions of attending creative workshops including various Creatorspace Programs (Oceanic Water Colours, Watercolour Florals and Botanicals, Beginner Ukulele, Folded Book Ornaments).



The benefits of *enjoyment*, *information/skills* and *social connection* were the key benefits with *confidence* and *eased loneliness* not rating at all (see Figure 7). The interviews showed that confidence building was a factor for some people:

Yeah, in the early days I was kind of nervous about things, you know, will I get this right? But no, I’m fully into it now. I love it! [I thought] People will laugh at my puny effort, but it turns out they don’t! (Interview 15)

Some participants talked about using the creative library programs to have a free trial of different hobbies that they would not usually have access to:

...That’s true, because to try them it’s expensive. I think that people have lost the art of hobbies as adults. I think there’s a really big resurgence, particularly with women, taking up hobbies again, it’s big, I’m seeing people start to do the things they’ve always wanted to do [...] It was good to have free trial to see if we liked it [...]a bunch of home school mum's, we’re on a budget and we could all go do an activity together, I thought it was really good. (Interview 13)

Social connection also features as many people talked about bringing friends along to the programs with them or meeting like-minded people at the event “I got to connect with others who share my interest in watercolour painting” (Online survey 17).

Inspirational Talks

There were ten survey participants (including five interviewees) that shared their experiences of attending inspirational talks including the high-profile Inspiration Hour (previously known as Cocktail Hour), and Author Hour. All interviewees were women over 50 years of age.

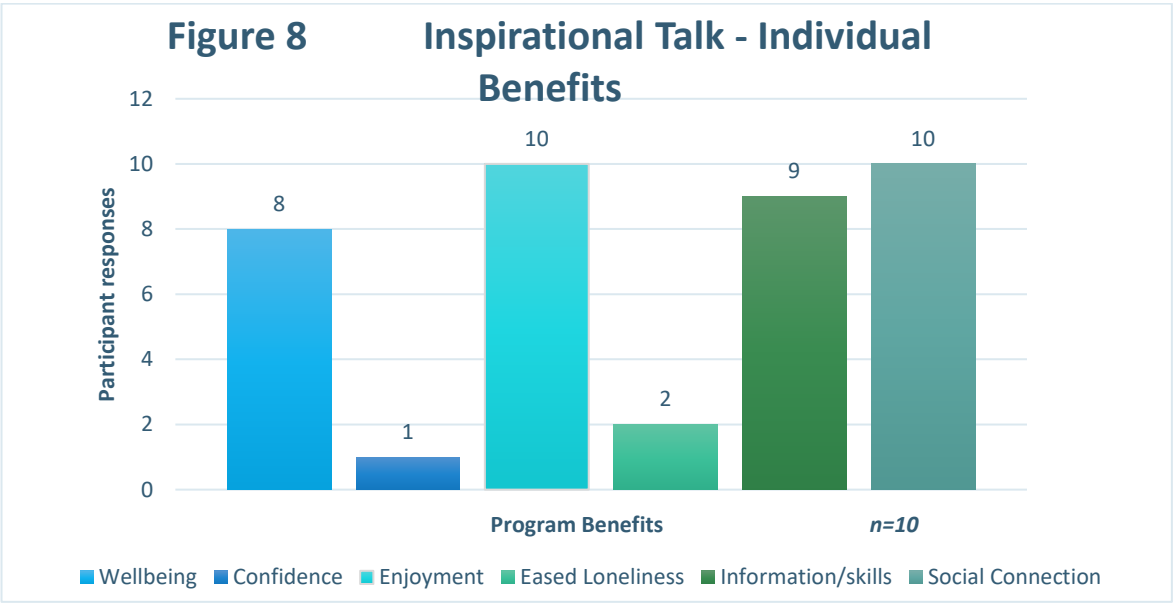


Figure 8 shows that *enjoyment* and *social connection* were cited by 100% of the respondents as key benefits closely followed by *information/skills* and *wellbeing*. High profile events benefit the library by increasing the trust and public image of the libraries. Being a public facing part of council, the libraries, can increase the image of the council through these popular programs and events.

Ipswich Libraries' programs also inspire a high level of civic pride through big-ticket events such as Inspiration Hour. These exclusive events which bring in high profile speakers were spoken about with fondness by many of the interviewees, "Denise Scott, she was great!" (Interviewee 1), "I saw Amanda Keller, she was amazing!" (Interviewee 2), "The one that stands out is Denise Scott. I'm trying to remember who else there was... Peter Fitzsimons, we missed out on Adam Liaw" (Interviewee 12).

The attendees each listed multiple speakers and expounded the joy at being part of such events, "Kurt Fearnley is an inspirational speaker, and we are blessed that Ipswich Library arranges these evenings" (Online Survey 25). This also demonstrates the long-term impact that library programs can have. All participants recalled strong positive associations with these events and most of these events were pre-COVID (some being up to six years ago). Many subjects talked about being able to do a 'meet and greet' and have their photos taken with the speaker as being very special. Regular event attendee, Interviewee 2, highlights the feeling of excitement at having a well-known identity speaking at the library:

You're there in-person, the atmosphere of having this person right in front of you and talking, "that's Francis Whiting, or Matthew Reilly just there" [...] or William McGuinness when he was up there! It was good for them to actually be there. (Interview 2)

When evaluating the results of the Likert scale question which asked about how connected they felt to Ipswich Libraries after attending an inspirational talk, all respondents said that it was *true* or *very true* that they felt "*more connected to the library.*" It can be inferred that these high-profile events give patrons deep and positive link to the branches. They also have the added library benefit of bringing in new cohorts to the library. One regular library program attendee, Interviewee 4, commented that at the big-name events, "I would see a lot of people I don't usually see at library events". These large-scale events break down barriers and provide an added incentive for lapsed or non-library users to visit the library and see for themselves what other features the library has (State Library of Queensland, 2023c).

Findings & Discussion - Deep Impact

Does adult programming provide opportunities for deep impact in these areas:

- **community connection,**
- **improved skills and knowledge,**
- **health and well-being improvements,**
- **occasions for inspiration and creativity.**

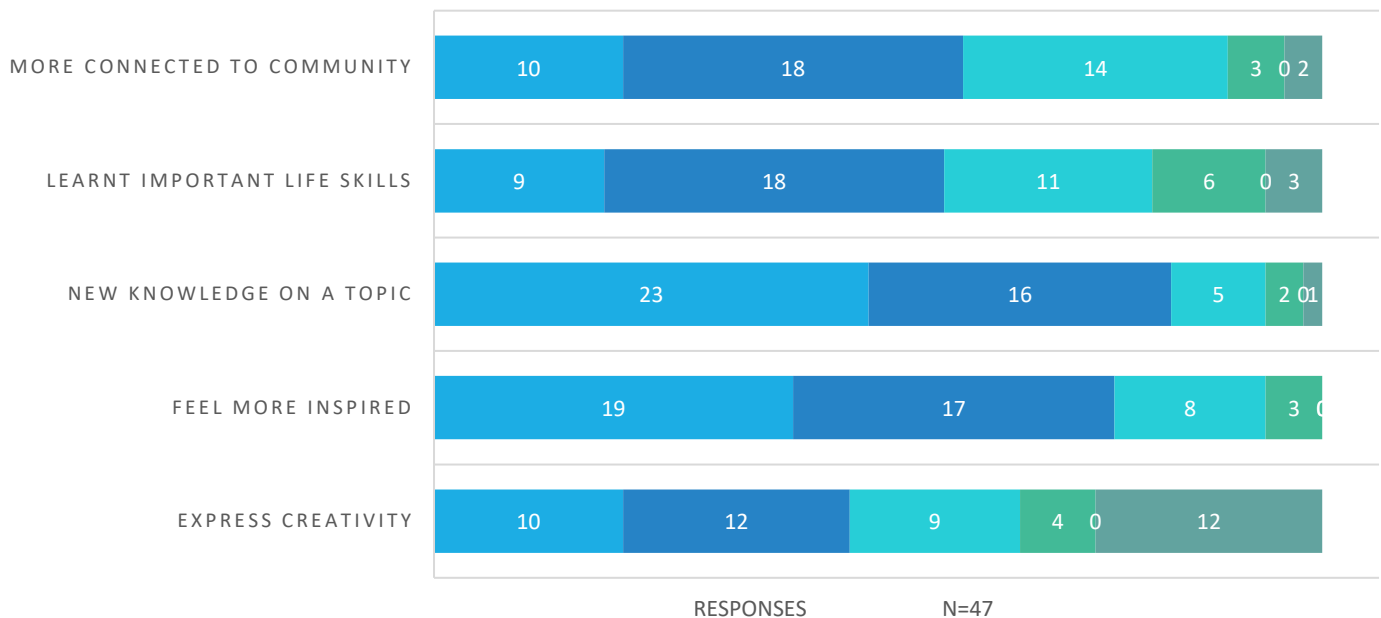
These areas were chosen for several reasons, firstly, they match the categorisation and goals of the Ipswich Libraries' programs so made the data collection and analysis more effective and efficient plus the community benefits can be easily extrapolated. They also align with aspects of the Ipswich City Council's corporate priorities including economic innovation and community building (Ipswich Libraries, 2021b). Lastly, these are the four pillars of the research areas from the innovative study completed by Roskilde Central Library and therefore make it easier to compare results and see any correlations between this study and the Danish one.

Likert scale measurements are useful for the examination of the depth of impact as people are able to rate the level of impact from *very true* through to *false* or *not applicable*. Across all programs the question "*My knowledge on a topic has increased*" rated the most impactful with 49% of responses stating *very true*. This reinforces the previous finding of the *information/skills* being the highest rated benefit (see Figure 9 for the total program impacts).

Figure 9

TOTAL LIBRARY PROGRAM IMPACTS

Very True True Somewhat True Not True False Not Applicable



Examining the Likert scale findings for lifestyle/health programs (see Appendix 6) The “*I came away feeling more inspired*” question was the most impactful with 50% of respondents stating *very true*. This is echoed in the qualitative data, with terms such as “enlightened”, “eyes opened”, and “empowered” used by multiple participants. The two interviewee’s who spoke about the It’s Perfectly Normal... Series, both passionately commented on the deep and lasting impact that the Period and Menopause programs each had on themselves and their families. They also spoke about being inspired by the programs to make dramatic changes to their lifestyles and how they think about their bodies and health:

I think I’m more armed and ready now; and it’s just having a lot more self-awareness since then and listening to that and having the broader conversation. I went to the Doctor and got all of my blood checked, and I’ve actually taken more control over my general health and wellbeing [...] Well, it’s important [...] So, I’ve had my breast screen, I had a bowel cancer screening test and I’ve got a new Doctor, I changed GPs, that was very relevant. It’s very reflective I think it was a really good moment to stop and have your own time. (Interview 9)

This participant talked at length about how she was inspired to act after attending both the Period and Menopause Programs and how she felt “more ready for the next phase” of her life. She also articulated that the knowledge gained gave her more confidence. This impacted her in two important areas, firstly, she felt more confident to change GPs. Interviewee 9 said that she had wanted to find a better doctor for a while, to “be properly armed with a good GP, my other one was ok, but she wasn’t thorough.” It was only after participating in the program that she had the impetus to find a more suitable doctor. She also felt more able to “guide her daughters into it [periods]” as she had a better understanding and more confidence. This interviewee also pointed out that she shares information with her peers about these types of things. She said that a friend is going through perimenopause so, “I was telling her things that I’ve learned, I did all dot points”. This information sharing is not isolated, studies show that “when you educate women about health, the whole community benefits.” (Szoeki, 2021, p. 21). This information sharing was reiterated by Interviewee 13 who also attended both It’s Perfectly Normal... programs. As a mother of three boys and one girl, this participant discussed the “utter ignorance” of men and boys not being taught about periods and menopause. She continued to explain “it’s not their fault, they were just never taught it [...] Well they need to know how it works and what’s going to happen.”

Interviewee 13 spoke vehemently about how the Period Program gave her an epiphany with how she feels about her body and how she manages her sanitary products. When asked about how the program impacted her:

Particularly the period one, I was like yes, yes! Because I now keep my pads on the toilet windowsill, I said ‘you know what, I’ve had my own house for 12 years!’ [...] You know, and I’ve been running and hiding them in the back of a drawer like a freaking criminal... and it’s my house, it’s MY house. Yeah, I’m actually taking it next level, I was actually going to make a box [for sanitary items] I’m thinking about decorating the box with the picture of her book [Period Queen by program presenter Lucy Peach]. I’m going all out! I’m going to embrace it, why not, if it were band aids, we wouldn’t hide it. We do that with first aid, a big like green cross, and it’s no different. So yeah, I think it really was amazing...I think women have been taught to and for both of them [periods and menopause] to be ashamed of these things that happen to their bodies instead of just being like something that they can talk about. (Interview 13)

It is difficult to convey in this paper just how much impact these programs had on these two participants. Both spoke passionately about how much their lives and that of their families are forever changed. It is impossible to know the scale of impact of these types of programs, but these two participants were deeply impacted. How many other participants from those two programs were also dramatically impacted? Considering the attendee statistics, It's Perfectly Normal... Periods had 31 attendees + multiple Zoom recording views and It's Perfectly Normal... Menopause had 56 attendees + 68 Zoom recording views. These programs may have had a vast and long-lasting impact throughout the community. Inferences can be made as to how many other program attendees may have had deep impact (see Appendix 5 for a list of program attendee statistics). Kostagiolas (2015) discusses the idea of library users having a “unique experience” that is shaped “... through a complex personal dialogue with the information space and the collective memory” (p.70).

Long-term impacts are an interesting area to examine but were not originally part of the research questions. Many interviewees related positive impacts and experiences from past programs, the oldest being six years ago. Seminal research in the area of long-term impacts for instructional library programs found that program attendees can in fact have long term positive impacts from attending library programs (Wong et al., 2006). This report did not aim to be a longitudinal study, however, when interviewing people, it became apparent that many have had long term impacts from programs. Interviewee 10 talked about the lasting impacts from a Learn Digital – Deeper Online Listening with Oscar Trimboli program series, which was held approximately a year before this study, in October 2021. The participant expressed that it greatly benefited her work, and she was able to give a whole list of techniques that she learnt, which she continues to use regularly with her work today:

I think it gave me a practical look at what online delivery looked like. It was demonstrated as the content was being delivered and I found that very helpful [...] Things were being demonstrated during the course and not just talked about [...] turned out to be really good. (Interview 10)

Another participant showed evidence of lasting impact from Cocktail Hour with Todd Sampson which occurred in 2016 (approximately six years before this study).

Amongst other things, Todd spoke about redesigning your brain and this respondent commented that they still “put some concepts into practice e.g., using left hand to brush teeth (when I’m right-handed)” (Online survey 38).

Reflecting on the Total Library Program Impacts Likert scale (see Figure 9). Combining the *very true* and *true* results, ‘*Connection to the library*’ equals ‘*New knowledge on a topic*’ as the most impactful segments both rating 83% and 39 out of 47 respondents. Drilling down further to a granular level the evidence shows that ‘*Connection to the library*’ was a clear impact within five of the six program categories:

- Inspirational talks 10 out of 10 (100%) respondents stated *very true* or *true* (Appendix 7)
- FOILS 6 out of 6 (100%) respondents stated *very true* or *true* (Appendix 8)
- Digital literacy 10 out of 11 (91%) respondents stated *very true* or *true* (Appendix 9)
- Creative workshops 5 out of 6 (83%) respondents stated *very true* or *true* (Appendix 10)
- History programs 13 out of 17 (77%) respondents stated *very true* or *true* (Appendix 11)

The only category not reported to have deep impact for library connection was lifestyle/health programs (see Appendix 6). Creative workshops was the category that generally had the least reported deep impact across all the segments with few *very true* responses (see Appendix 10).

When comparing these findings with the report from Roskilde Central Library (2021), the Roskilde research showed that staff guidance was a highly impactful segment, and this study concurs with these findings as programs which have intensive staff involvement (e.g., digital literacy, FOILS, history program) or a high community profile (e.g., inspirational talks) lead to the most impact for connection to library. Note: the Roskilde study did not explicitly question its participants about their connection to the library.

Findings & Discussion - Value and Satisfaction

To understand the perceived worth and the satisfaction levels of the Ipswich community related to library programs several quantitative factors will be employed including contingent value, a scaled question related to the importance of programs, and alternative service options. Again, the qualitative data will give a deeper understanding and fill in the gaps.

Does the Ipswich community value it's library programming?

The contingent valuation method includes variables such as the participant's willingness to pay, in this case for a free (rate payer subsidised) service. Two specific survey questions were used to address this topic.

Firstly, this question was asked:

To understand the value of library events. How much would you pay for the same event if it was held by an external service provider?

Interestingly, 72% or 34 out of 47 people stated that they would pay something (from \$10 and under to over \$20). Five respondents (11%) stated that they would not pay for an equivalent event (see Table 5). Four of these indicated that they could not afford to pay for these types of programs. Even though it is considered statistically irrelevant, only one respondent chose the *I do not think it would be worth paying money for this program/event* response. This person was one of two survey participants to express dissatisfaction with the programs that they attended. A point should be made that even though several people have stated that using an external service provider, other than a public library, they would be willing to pay, does not mean that they *would* pay. This measure is designed to understand what the theoretical financial value of a program would be, and therefore how valuable these programs are to the participants.

Table 5

Contingent Value - Willingness to Pay

N=47	Number of responses	Percentage
\$10 and under	11	23%
\$11 - \$20	9	19%
Over \$20	14	30%
I would not pay for this program/event.	5	11%
Not Applicable (these are from the Pen-Pal Program)	8	17%
Totals	47	100%

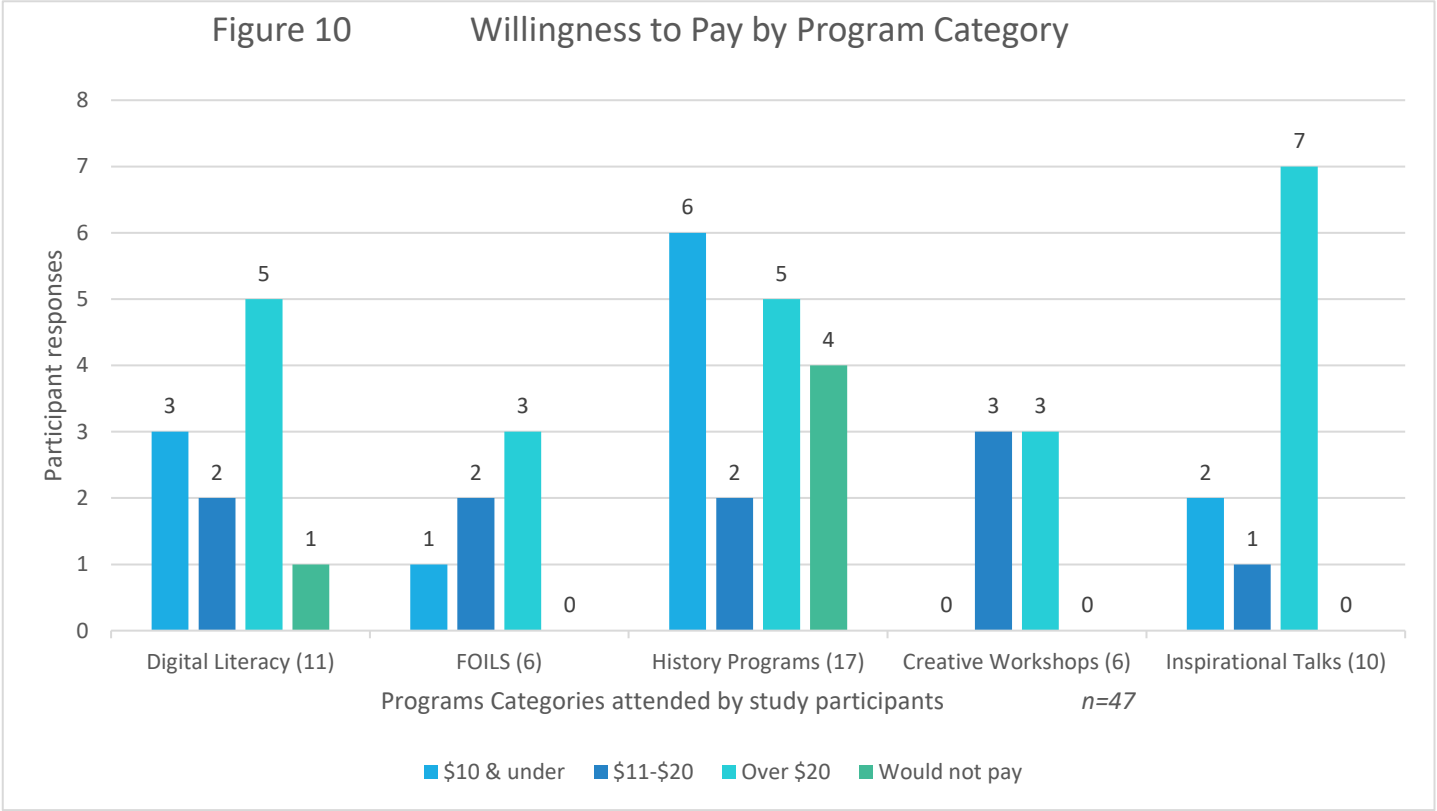
The qualitative data gives a deeper understanding of the importance of free library programming. When analysing the interview statements, seven patrons made a point to express the fact that library programs are free is a major factor in deciding to book in. Three interviewees have young families and are on a tight budget, Interviewee 13 said “I think as well that with the no cost... I don't have to think about can I afford this this week”. Four interviewees stated that they are retirees on a fixed income:

I doubt I could afford to attend a similar workshop if it were run by an external commercial provider, so I really appreciate the library being able to offer such programming and making it accessible to everyone. (Online Survey 17)

Even with Ipswich Libraries programs being offered for free it has always been important to both the community and library management that a high standard of programs be upheld. One interviewee reflected on the quality of programming offered:

One other thing is that free is a factor that does come into it, being retired my income is finite so I don't want to blow the superannuation all at once... I enjoy the free events, who doesn't love a free event, but the level, the quality is so good, it doesn't feel free. (Interview 12)

Analysing the willingness to pay by program category breakdown (see Figure 10) there is a differentiation between programs that people would pay for and those that they would not. This shows an understanding of the participants of the ‘real-world’ value of the Ipswich Libraries’ programs.



For example, 100% of participants surveyed that attended both creative workshops and inspirational talks stated that they would pay for the equivalent events. They would also pay the most with 50% and 70% respectively saying that they would pay over \$20. This demonstrates understanding by these library patrons that to attend the equivalent events in both categories is a very costly when they are conducted by commercial providers.

The FOILS category is different in regard to cost. It is primarily a library fundraising group therefore all programs tend to have an associated cost and 100% of respondents said they expect to pay and are happy that they are helping worthy causes such as children’s literacy, “It’s important that children are exposed to books early” (Online survey 37).

The digital literacy category and history programs had interesting results in regards to attendee's willingness to pay. These were the two areas which had the highest number of "*would not pay*" results and, if they said they would pay, it was the lowest payment amount. This may be for two reasons and the complementary qualitative data can assist with explanations. The digital literacy and history programs are almost exclusively attended by older demographics, this can be attributed to both need and an interest in the topics. The program participants surveyed for this study are either retired or semi-retired and identified their budgetary constraints as a reason for not wanting to pay much or anything at all. Another reason identified was that these two categories had the highest number of alternative service providers, both free and paid options. The fact that the respondents could name multiple external service providers which offer a similar service may be a reason why they would be less likely to say they would be willing to pay.

Please note: lifestyle/health was removed from this analysis due to the high number of Pen-Pal Program "*not applicable*" results. The logistics and nature of the Pen-Pal Program meant that an option to join a paid service provider is not possible therefore these participants were only given the "*not applicable*" option for this question.

The other question which examines the value of Ipswich Libraries' programs was the following Likert scale question:

Library programs/events are important to me.

This question received a positive consensus result with every respondent stating that programs were either *very true*, *true* or *somewhat true* (see Table 6). Interestingly, even the two survey respondents who weren't particularly satisfied with their events still stated that library programs were important to them. For example, an Online survey respondent said:

The Writing event was not what I wanted or expected, however all the other events I have attended have been very helpful and have helped me with my research and taught me more about how to use technology. (Online survey 28)

There were other comments that demonstrate how positively people feel about the Ipswich Libraries' program such as "They are awesome!!!" (Online survey 32), and "Ipswich Libraries are spot on with their programmes" (Online survey 26).

Table 6

Library programs/events are important to me.

N=47	Number of responses	Percentage
Very True	23	49%
True	19	40%
Somewhat True	5	11%
Not True	0	0%
False	0	0%
Not Applicable	0	0%
Totals	47	100%

A public library's ability to generate social capital, that is, the networks of shared knowledge and values which help a society to function effectively, have been shown to be very important for community building, and social cohesion (Khoir et al., 2017). During the interviews, I found that long term library members who engage with library programs have part of their social identity tied to the library. All the FOILS members interviewed expressed their love of Ipswich Libraries and their role as volunteers in FOILS programs such as Books for Babies and Baby Rhyme Time:

I joined FOILS because I've been a library member since I was 5 [over 60 years] and I absolutely love everything that FOILS does, we've all followed through all our life, the Ipswich Library, from in town to the new one down here.
(Interviewee 3)

Can Ipswich Libraries' adult programming satisfy community needs?

To answer this research question two areas were examined. Firstly, I wanted to know what alternative service providers the participants would use if the library did not offer these types of programs. All survey respondents and interviewees were asked:

If Ipswich Libraries did not provide this service/event, can you name another organisation where you could do the same type of program?

The wide diversity of program categories means that there were a wide range of answers (see Appendix 12 for a full breakdown of alternative service providers). Assessing the responses leads to a remarkable paradox. On one hand, Ipswich Libraries seem to fulfill the needs of the masses under one roof. As many as 23 other options were named as alternative service providers for the various program categories. Alternatively, and contradictorily, 15 respondents stated that they had “no idea” or were “not sure” of where else they could access similar information or services, and six respondents left the answer blank. It can be inferred from this that 21 out of 47 or 45% of those surveyed did not know where they could turn to receive the same help, benefits, or outcomes if Ipswich Libraries did not offer these programs.

Looking at the other service alternatives, many options that were listed are paid services or events. Digital literacy and history programs had the greatest number of alternative service providers listed by respondents. The most common answers will be listed and then discussed using the qualitative data:

- **Digital literacy alternative services**
 - University of the Third Age (Membership costs)
 - Senior Net (Memberships cost)
 - Telstra/Optus or equivalent (Costs per service)
 - Church groups/community groups (usually free)

Qualitatively, the interviewees discussed the pros and cons of the various alternative options. The structure of the Be Connected digital literacy program was highlighted by many as a positive. It is a semi-structured program which is based on the Australian government Be Connected website. The Ipswich Libraries Be Connected program is designed to allow participants to work at their own pace and can ask for specific assistance from staff as required, many attendees like this way of doing things:

I have so enjoyed this fabulous program. The greatest thing about this course is you are not pressured into learning anything you don't want to. Everything is at your pace, and what you are interested in learning. (Online survey 33)

Senior Net, U3A, and community-based organisations were listed as alternatives, but many interviewees stated that these programs are highly structured, and it is easy to be left behind:

Yeah, there's the Senior Net, but the thing is you have to be there for each session, they're on number 6, I think, of a 7-week program, Introduction to Computers. When I first got there, he'd gone through the 7 stages and gone on to more advanced stuff, and I was sitting there [...] thinking what the hell is all this about? (Interview 7)

On the other hand, Interviewee 11 who has a high level of technology skills felt the Senior Net classes were too slow for her:

But with those they seem to do 5 weeks as a class now not everybody works at the same speed, where is this one [Ipswich Libraries Be Connected], you can do your own thing and ask when you want. No, I'm not sitting there for 5 weeks listening to that, I don't need to listen to that level of tuition, and I'd rather do it on my own. (Interview 11)

The skills of the programming staff are also a key factor to satisfaction levels. Library staff are seen to be highly trusted and relationships with staff are viewed by patrons as valuable and bring positive benefits to the patrons (McCosker et al., 2020; Roskilde Central Library, 2021; Sørensen, 2021). One comment highlights how library staff are considered to be more trained or standardised with their approach than other community-based programs:

I have done some of their [Senior Net] computer courses but the tutor that does it he's very good, but it is his own personal interest. I don't know that he's actually qualified as a Tech, he might be, I don't think he was [...] but it is a voluntary organization, so it depends very much on the tutor's time and effort. (Interview 11)

The [programming] staff are so patient and kind. They have introduced me to another world of enjoyment which I am going to continue with. I am planning to buy myself an iPad. Thank you once again! (Online survey 33)

It is often touted that older Australians should turn to their children or family for help with technology. However, the reality is that many digital literacy program participants do not have family members to ask for assistance. It is also not uncommon for library staff to be told that patrons feel they cannot ask their children/grandchildren for help as they feel like a burden:

Well, thing is that all the relatives and the children you know, they've all gone to university. Their jobs are all on the net and they don't want to look at our computer problems, I don't put that on them. (Interview 5)

- **History program alternative services**

- State Library of Queensland
- Ipswich Historical Society (cost for service)
- Ipswich Genealogical Society (cost for service)
- Other public library services (e.g., Brisbane City Council libraries)

Interviewees highlighted the fact that being easily accessible, or a close to home is a positive factor. Several respondents discussed the difficulties of traveling to other library services including the State Library of Queensland, for example extra costs such as parking:

I'm aware that the State Library does have events from time to time, but I haven't gotten back into that since COVID, like it's a bit of a hike down to Brisbane. (Interview 15)

[...] but that's a chunk of time, that's an hour to make sure you're going to make it in there with traffic, half an hour back, time to find the venue, parking, and that's a really big space of time. (Interview 13)

The variety of programs offered by Ipswich Libraries was another area that respondents discussed with satisfaction:

I can't see another institution running the sorts of programs the library runs, and what they are running does have an impact on the people who have attended [...] They are looking after the library members. Offering a variety of interesting classes or courses for varied people. (Interviewee 2)

I think Ipswich Libraries does a really good job in providing a very broad range of topics and skills that people are able to learn from [...] Right from little ones up through to the elderly [...] from my point of view, from the older generation, I think the library more than meets my needs. I look at the leaflets that are on display all the time when I'm at the Library and I think oh, there is really something there catering for all different age groups and there is also an emphasis on digital type things, they're keeping up with those needs, now whether that meets the needs of young people, or not, I don't know. From my perspective I'm impressed [...] and I think the library is trying to do something for everyone. (Interview 4)

The question of online versus in-person programming organically came out of the interviews and surveys. The adjustments made for COVID-19 safe practises have given library programmers another method for reaching their demographics. Offering online programs has given people greater accessibility for a variety of reasons. The following explanations have been cited by respondents for why they like online programming options:

- Those who do not drive, especially at night,
- People living with special needs or disabilities,
- Parents who cannot leave their children,
- Convenience for those with busy work/life schedules,
- Self-quarantining for health reasons.

Even respondents who would rather in-person events acknowledged that being able to offer the online programs to the above demographics is an important option. The

reasons people stated they preferred in-person events were mostly due to technical reticence:

The in-person ones are great because for somebody with shall we say, the tech difficulties that I do, just raising your arm and asking a question can be easier than, “Ah, where's the hand, click, click, oh no I've logged out!” (Interview 15)

Others stated that in-person provides more opportunities for social connection.

Interviewee 11 states “I quite like coming in, only because I live on my own and it's nice to come in and interact.” One Interviewee differentiated between the type of programming, preferring professional programs to be online, social type programs to be in-person:

I think that has two prongs to that, for a work benefit thing, I'm starting to prefer online because it seems more efficient to me. Yeah I can get more out of it online within my work flow day [...] but when it comes to a personal thing, if it was a personal topic [author talks, creative workshops] that I went for, I love to go in person and meet people with a similar interest, that are interested in the same kind of content and that's in [...] a post-COVID environment that's becoming appealing once more. Yeah there's a lot to be said, about gathering around the tea table after the content's been delivered, that sharing, really builds community. (Interview 10)

Quantitatively, there are no statistics to draw on as almost everyone had attended both online and in-person. Each had preferences but the only real consensus for the online versus in-person programs debate is that people cannot agree which is better and that they ultimately want both to be offered as each method fulfills different needs. It will be up to the individual libraries to assess each program and the needs of their patrons.

Findings & Discussion – Return on Investment & Methods

The elephant in the room is the issue of quantifying the Return on Investment (ROI) in relation to library programming. Is it possible to calculate it? Would it be accurate? As previously discussed in the literature review there is a plethora of studies worldwide showing the economic value, in particular the ROI of public libraries (as a whole). This research convincingly demonstrates that public libraries offer a positive Return on

Investment (Aabø, 2009; Public Libraries South Australia, 2020; Stenstrom et al., 2019; State Library Victoria, 2018; State Library of Queensland, 2012; Texas State Library and Archives Commission, 2012). Several reports demonstrate that Australian public libraries offer high ROI to their local communities. From \$4.30 of benefits for every dollar expended in Victoria (State Library Victoria, 2018, p. 7) to State Library of Queensland's *Library Dividend* report, which demonstrated libraries averaged a return of 2.3 (\$1:\$2.30) but could potentially reach 4.1 (\$1:\$4.10) (State Library of Queensland, 2012). This report also addresses the difficulty of establishing an economic or cost benefit modelling for programs "...due to the significant number of assumptions needed for its inclusion. The assumptions required would result in high levels of inaccuracy" (State Library of Queensland, 2012, p. 76).

To work out an accurate ROI, a full analysis of costs would be required. Expenditure for programs could include but may not be limited to the following items:

- Presenter costs (including fees, travel, and accommodation)
- Program specific resources (stationary, supplies, demonstration equipment and consumables)
- Venue hire plus tech support staff and equipment
- Catering (food, beverages, glasses, crockery, utensils, table clothes)
- Marketing costs (design, printing, social media advertising)
- Wage costs (some wages will be considered business-as-usual, but penalty rates for after hour events will be added to budgetary considerations)

Many programs are held in library spaces and therefore do not have venue hire costs, but this will differ from library to library. Working out the wage costs can have added complexity. Some library staff may be considered a fixed cost (for permanent staff) but some libraries without a specific programming team may assign wage costs to the programming department, especially for casual staff wages. There are so many variables to each different category of program that it is difficult to compare. A simplified and hypothetical program costing comparison examines three different program structures and costs (see Table 7).

Table 7***Program Costing Comparison***

Program category	Inspirational Talk	Creative Workshop	Digital Literacy
Program name	Inspiration Hour	Learn to Draw – Still Life	Be Connected
Program duration	1 hr	3 hrs	2 hr drop-in session
Number of staff required	4	1	3
Estimated wages*	\$180	\$135	\$270
Number of attendees	150	20	12
Total External costs**	\$5000	\$600	nil
Cost per head	\$33.33/attendee	\$30/attendee	\$22.50/attendee
* Direct wages cost not including set up or pack down			
**Presenter fees, catering, resources, venue costs			

Looking at the cost per attendee the most expensive being the Inspiration Hour \$33.33/attendee and the Digital Literacy being the least expensive at \$22.50/attendee. However, what do those numbers really mean and how do these costs relate to community impact? The issue also becomes even more complex for libraries with a smaller patron base or in rural areas. Some events might have only five attendees, and then the costs per head might be over \$100. If ROI is the only consideration, at what point is it too high? The benefits to individuals, the community and the library which were discussed in detail in the findings section show that each of these programs can have broad reaching and deeply impacting benefits and many positive outcomes.

A digital inclusion report based on the Be Connected program went to significant effort to evaluate the Social Return on Investment (SROI) for the full Be Connected program Australia wide across all network providers for the first four years. They found that just over \$4.01 was generated in social value for every dollar of investment. The researchers of this mixed methodology study found that this social value comprised of

many positive outcomes including increased digital skills and social connection and decreased loneliness (McCosker et al., 2020). Whilst this study was not based solely on library Be Connected programs, it is a good example of how SROI can be used in conjunction with narrative to demonstrate the value of programming.

I believe that trying to place a definitive numeric measure such as ROI for library programming is almost an impossible task. The quantitative and qualitative evidence presented in this report shows that it is a complex and variable relationship between the benefits, values and impacts to the individuals and the library community. Others criticise the use of accounting measurements such as ROI or CBA for being myopic or as a monetizing of the outcomes of social based public organisations (Cordes, 2017; Kostagiolas, 2015). However, it would be a naïve assertion to think that financial rationalisation is not a reality especially in this post-pandemic economic environment. There will always be benchmarks to meet and budgets to adhere to. Public libraries need to show value to their key stakeholders, and the community that they serve. It ultimately comes down to public libraries knowing what their community needs and wants are and aiming to meet these. Understanding what your users' priorities are and how best to expend the budget is a more productive focus than trying to quantify a ROI.

How can qualitative and quantitative data work together to increase the effectiveness when reporting the value of library programming?

The overarching aim of this paper was to examine how to best report the value of library public programming. It was surmised that numbers have little meaning without words and as such, quantitative and qualitative data would be equally required to provide a balanced and in-depth understanding of this complex problem.

Throughout this report, I have endeavoured to use quantitative data to show one part of the answer and then qualitative data to fill in the gaps or give a truer representation of the situation. Throughout this complex and iterative process, I have proven that there is no short cut to showing the value of library programming. Other authors have identified that using a mixed method is the most effective way to demonstrate the

complex proposition of considering both the social and financial values of a library at the same time (Holt et al., 1996; Stenstrom et al., 2019; OECD/European Union, 2015; Wyatt et al., 2018). This study has applied these strategies to assessing the programming function of Ipswich Libraries and found that in fact the mixed methodology while more complex, gives a better overall understanding of the value of programming in a public library setting.

Conclusion

These interviews and surveys have produced in-depth qualitative testimony from individual participants of Ipswich Libraries' programs. No two experiences were the same, but the evidence shows that many participants expressed profound life changes and impacts from attending library programs.

Understanding the value of library programs is a complex topic which requires a nuanced and multifaceted approach. This research found that both quantitative and qualitative data are required to allow for a full understanding of the impacts on individual program participants, their community, and the library itself.

Through this mixed method lens these were the key findings:

- Clear community and individual benefits with the top three benefits being *new knowledge, enjoyment*, and an increased sense of *wellbeing*.
- Programs offer definite opportunities for deep and long-term impact including life changing improved health outcomes.
- Ipswich Libraries' programs do satisfy patron needs and those library members place a high value on programs.

Further to these individual and community benefits organisational benefits were also discovered with value adding for the both the library and other Ipswich City Council initiatives. Benefits include, greater use of the library and its resources as well as increasing the trust and public image of both the library and the council.

This quote from online survey 25 shows how Ipswich Libraries' programs are impacting the community and bringing benefits to the patrons:

The program is improving my life ... Love Ipswich Library and its myriad resources, ways of access and helpful and expert staff. Way more than books and great example of evolving the library space to remain relevant to community.

Limitations

Due to practical limitations such as time and cost, this research only focused on adult programming within Ipswich Libraries. This library system has a dedicated and highly dynamic public programming team consequently there is a wide variety of adult programs occurring at any point in time. This allowed for a range of experiences to be reported on across the six program categories. However, the number of respondents per category was limited with the smallest being six (FOILS and creative workshops) and the largest being 17 (history programs) from a total of 15 interviews and 47 surveys. There was a bias in genders with more females than males represented in the interviews.

Even though this study had a limited sample size for both the quantitative and qualitative populations, it has proved that there is a case to be made and that further study is warranted. The sample population of interviewees was limited to people that were both willing and able to participate in the interview. This may have caused some demographics to be underrepresented (e.g., parents, working age cohorts).

This study only focused on program attendees, consequently, there was a hidden population which was not represented in this research. To have a full understanding of *potential* participant needs and their possible outcomes it would be worth interviewing and surveying two other cohorts - non-members and lapsed members of the library, and members of the library who do not attend library programs.

Future research

This has been a preliminary study on the value of public library programming. It is recommended that further research be conducted. This study focused on the benefits to the individuals and community, however interesting results were uncovered about the organisational benefits to the libraries and the council. It would be pertinent to examine how programming attendees use the other resources of the library including

asking what they do in the library before and after programs to see the impact on borrowing statistics and resources utilisation.

As mentioned earlier, there appears to be a pattern with programming across Australia, with total attendance numbers not yet back to pre-pandemic levels, but with public libraries offering more programs than ever. This trend would be worth further investigation.

References

- Aabø, S. (2009). Libraries and return on investment (ROI): A meta-analysis. *New Library World*, 110(7/8), 311-324. <https://doi.org/10.1108/03074800910975142>
- Australian Library and Information Association. (2021). *Standards and guidelines for Australian public libraries*. <https://read.alia.org.au/apla-alia-standards-and-guidelines-australian-public-libraries-may-2021>
- Barbakoff, A. (2015). Get on board with community needs: Ferry tales, a monthly book group aboard a ferry. In A. Molaro & L. L. White, (Eds.), *The library innovation toolkit: ideas, strategies, and programs*. (pp. 71-80). American Library Association.
- Barchas-Lichtenstein, J., Norlander, R., Voiklis, J., Nock, K., Fraser, J., & Danter, E. (2019). *National impact of library public programs assessment: Summative report*. (NewKnowledge Publication #IML.074.207.06). American Library Association. <https://nilppa.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/NILPPA-Summative-Report.pdf>
- Barchas-Lichtenstein, J., Norlander, R. J., Fraser, J., Fournier, M. D., Voiklis, J., Nock, K., & Danter, E. (2020). Categorizing library public programs. *The Library Quarterly*, 90(4), 563–579. <https://doi.org/10.1086/710259>
- Bryman, A. (2006). Integrating quantitative and qualitative research: How is it done? *Qualitative Research*, 6(1), 97–113. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794106058877>
- Casselden, B., Pickard, A., Walton, G., & McLeod, J. (2019). Keeping the doors open in an age of austerity? Qualitative analysis of stakeholder views on volunteers in public libraries. *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science*, 51(4), 869–883. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0961000617743087>
- Colibaba, A., Skinner, M. W., & Furgal, C. (2019). The challenges and opportunities of sustaining volunteer-based rural libraries. *Public Library Quarterly*, 38(4), 410–427. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01616846.2019.1576117>
- Cordes, J. J. (2017). Using cost-benefit analysis and social return on investment to evaluate the impact of social enterprise: Promises, implementation, and limitations. *Evaluation and Program Planning*, 64, 98–104. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.evalprogplan.2016.11.008>
- Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2007). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. Sage Publications.
- DeBenedet, D. (2018). *Social return on investment*. Dryden Public Library. http://fopl.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/CommunityReport_Dryden-2.pdf

- De Leon, S. V. (2021). The social return on investment methodology as a tool for valuation and impact assessment for libraries: A case study. *Journal of the Australian Library and Information Association*, 70(2), 177-193.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/24750158.2021.1895465>
- Flick, U. (Ed.). (2007). *Designing qualitative research*. Sage Publications.
- Fraser, J., Sheppard, B., & Norlander, R. J. (2014). *National impact of library public programs assessment (NILPPA): Meta-analysis of the American library association public programs office archives*. (NewKnowledge Publication #IMLS.74.83.02). American Library Association.
<https://www.ala.org/tools/sites/ala.org.tools/files/content/Meta%20Analysis%20Final%20Report%202014%2004%2022%281%29.pdf>
- Hargittai, E., Piper, A. M., & Morris, M. R. (2019). From internet access to internet skills: digital inequality among older adults. *Universal Access in the Information Society*, 18(4), 881–890. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10209-018-0617-5>
- Holt, G.E., Elliott, D., & Dussold, C. (1996). A framework for evaluating public investment in urban libraries. *The Bottom Line*, 9(4), 4–13.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/08880459610131772>
- Institute of Museum and Library Services. (2021). *Understanding the social wellbeing impacts of the nation's libraries and museums*.
<https://www.ims.gov/sites/default/files/2021-10/swi-report-accessible.pdf>
- International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions. (1994). *IFLA/UNESCO public library manifesto 1994*.
<https://repository.ifla.org/bitstream/123456789/168/1/pl-manifesto-en.pdf>
- Ipswich City Council. (2021). *Annual report 2020-2021*.
https://www.ipswich.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0018/221841/ICC_Annual-Report_2020-2021.pdf
- Ipswich City Council. (2022). *Annual report 2021-2022*.
https://www.ipswich.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/236335/ICC_Annual-Report_2021-2022_11_WEB.pdf
- Ipswich Libraries. (2021a). *Ipswich libraries survey report 2020/21*.
https://www.ipswichlibraries.com.au/wp-content/uploads/LibrariesSurveyReport_A4_5-Final.pdf
- Ipswich Libraries. (2021b). *Ipswich libraries strategy 2021-2026 [Draft]*. [Item 3 Draft Ipswich Libraries Strategy 2021-2026 - Attachment Draft Ipswich Library Strategy Presentation \(infocouncil.biz\)](https://www.ipswichlibraries.com.au/wp-content/uploads/LibrariesStrategy2021-2026-Draft-Attachment-Draft-Ipswich-Library-Strategy-Presentation-infocouncil.biz)
- Khoir, S., Du, J. T., Davison, R. M., & Koronios, A. (2017). Contributing to social capital: An investigation of Asian immigrants' use of public library

- services. *Library & Information Science Research*, 39(1), 34–45.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lisr.2017.01.005>
- Kostagiolas, P.A. (2015). No regrets; just lessons: Economic crisis is changing our life and the management of libraries. In S. O'Connor (Ed.), *Library management in disruptive times: skills and knowledge for an uncertain future* (pp. 66-83). Facet Publishing.
- Koufogiannakis, D., & Brettle, A. (2016). *Being evidence based in library and information practice*. Facet Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.29085/9781783301454>
- Ladner, S. (2019). *Mixed methods: A short guide to applied mixed methods research*. Sam Ladner.
- Library Research Service. (2016). *Survey finds that public library program attendance has steadily increased over the past 3 years*.
<https://www.lrs.org/2016/08/03/survey-finds-that-public-library-program-attendance-has-steadily-increased-over-the-past-3-years/>
- Luo, L. (2018). Health information programming in public libraries: A content analysis. *Public Library Quarterly*, 37(3), 233–247.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/01616846.2018.1498704>
- Markless, S., & Streatfield, D. (2013). *Evaluating the impact of your library* (2nd ed.). Facet Publishing.
- Mathiasson, M.H., & Jochumsen, H. (2019). Researching public library programs through Facebook events: a new research approach. *Journal of Documentation*, 75(4), 857–875. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JD-08-2018-0137>
- McCosker, A., Tucker, J., Critchley, C., Hiruy, K., Walshe, J., Suchowerska, R., & Barraket, J. (2020). *Improving the digital inclusion of older Australians: The social impact of Be Connected*. Swinburne Research Bank.
https://researchbank.swinburne.edu.au/file/aa09f991-b48c-4842-95ca-7160bc6f0fc0/1/2020-mccosker-improving_the_digital.pdf
- National and State Libraries Australasia. (2024). *Annual Australian public libraries statistics*. <https://www.nsla.org.au/resources/public-libraries-statistics/>
- Neuman, W.L. (2012). *Basics of social research: Qualitative and quantitative approaches* (3rd ed.). Pearson Education.
- National Impact of Library Public Programs Assessment. (n.d.). *About NILPPA*.
<https://nilppa.org/about/>
- National Impact of Library Public Programs Assessment. (2023, April 25). *Better programs, deeper impacts, and expanded capacities: What makes library partnerships valuable*. <https://nilppa.org/blog/better-programs-deeper-impacts-and-expanded-capacities-what-makes-library-partnerships-valuable/>

- O'Connor, S. (2015). What is behind the meaning of disruption? Or, thinking of management strategies from the outside. In S. O'Connor (Ed.), *Library management in disruptive times: skills and knowledge for an uncertain future* (pp. 141-154). Facet Publishing.
- OECD/European Union. (2015). Policy brief on social impact measurement for social enterprises: Policies for social entrepreneurship. OECD/European Commission, Publications Office of the European Union. https://www.oecd.org/social/PB-SIM-Web_FINAL.pdf
- Osman, K., Wilson, C., Marshall, A., & Rogers, J. (2022). *Digital inclusion programs evaluation 2016-2022*. State Library of Queensland. https://content.plconnect.slq.qld.gov.au/sites/default/files/State%20Library%20Summary%20March%202023_rev.pdf
- Public Libraries South Australia. (2020). The answer is libraries: The value of public libraries in South Australia. <https://www.plsa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/The-Value-of-Public-Libraries-in-South-Australia.pdf>
- Queensland Public Libraries Association. (2018). *Queensland public libraries association strategic plan 2018-2022*. <https://qpla.asn.au/about/about-qpla>
- Roskilde Central Library. (2021). *The impact of public libraries in Denmark: A haven in our community*. https://www.roskildebib.dk/sites/roskilde.ddbcms.dk/files/files/news/roskildebib_folkebibliotekets_betydning_for_borgerne_i_danmark_eng_final_0.pdf
- Ryan, P., & Cole, B. (2016). Public libraries. In D. Koufogiannakis & A. Brett (Eds.), *Being evidence based in library and information practice*. (pp. 106-119). Facet Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.29085/9781783301454>
- Sørensen, K. M. (2021). Where's the value? The worth of public libraries: A systematic review of findings, methods and research gaps. *Library & Information Science Research*, 43(1), 101067. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lisr.2020.101067>
- State Library of New South Wales. (2021). *Public library statistics*. Public Library Services. <https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/public-library-services/advice-and-best-practice/public-library-statistics>
- State Library of Queensland. (n.d.). *Queensland public library standards and guidelines – guideline for programs*. <https://plconnect.slq.qld.gov.au/queensland-public-library-standards-and-guidelines?chapter=4526#4549>
- State Library of Queensland. (2012). *The library dividend: A study of the socio-economic value Queensland public libraries* [Technical Report]. <https://content.plconnect.slq.qld.gov.au/sites/default/files/SLQ-librarydividendtechnical-2012.pdf>

- State Library of Queensland. (2020). *Australian public libraries statistical report 2018-19*. Public Libraries Connect.
<https://content.plconnect.slq.qld.gov.au/sites/default/files/SLQ-statistical-bulletin-2018-19-20200406.pdf>
- State Library of Queensland. (2021). *Queensland public libraries statistical report 2019-20*. Public Libraries Connect.
<https://content.plconnect.slq.qld.gov.au/sites/default/files/SLQ-statistical-bulletin-2019-20-20210228.pdf>
- State Library of Queensland. (2022). *Queensland public libraries statistical bulletin 2020-21*. Public Libraries Connect.
<https://content.plconnect.slq.qld.gov.au/sites/default/files/SLQ-statistical-bulletin-2021-20220315.pdf>
- State Library of Queensland. (2023a). *Future libraries: Better communities stakeholder symposium*. Public Libraries Connect.
<https://plconnect.slq.qld.gov.au/professional-development/future-libraries-better-communities-stakeholder-symposium>
- State Library of Queensland. (2023b). *Queensland public libraries statistical bulletin 2021-22*. Public Libraries Connect.
<https://content.plconnect.slq.qld.gov.au/sites/default/files/SLQ-statistical-bulletin-2021-2022-Final-Report.pdf>
- State Library of Queensland. (2023c). *Love your library market research 2023: Report of findings*. Public Libraries Connect.
<https://content.plconnect.slq.qld.gov.au/sites/default/files/Love%20Your%20Library%20Proof%20Research%20report%20for%20publication%20draft.pdf>
- State Library of Queensland. (2024). *Queensland public libraries statistical bulletin 2022-23*. Public Libraries Connect.
https://content.plconnect.slq.qld.gov.au/sites/default/files/Statistical%20Bulletin%202022-23%20Final%20%281%29_0.pdf
- State Library Victoria. (2018). *Libraries Work!: The socio-economic value of public libraries to Victorians*. <https://www.slv.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/Libraries-work.pdf>
- Stenstrom, C., Cole, N., & Hanson, R. (2019). A review exploring the facets of the value of public libraries. *Library Management*, 40(6/7), 354–367.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/LM-08-2018-0068>
- Szoeke, C. (2021). *Secrets of women's healthy ageing*. Melbourne University Press.

- Texas State Library and Archives Commission. (2012). Texas public libraries: Economic benefits and return on investment. *Texas Library Journal*, 89(1), 6–
<https://repositories.lib.utexas.edu/bitstream/handle/2152/19093/bbr-2012-texas-public-libraries.pdf;sequence=2>
- Thorpe, C., & Howlett, A. (2020). Understanding EBLIP at an organizational level: An initial maturity model. *Evidence Based Library and Information Practice*, 15(1), 90-105. <https://doi.org/10.18438/EBLIP29639>
- Walker, B. (2021, March 10). Which Ipswich library is up for a national award? *Ipswich First*. <https://www.ipswichfirst.com.au/which-ipswich-library-is-up-for-a-national-award/>
- Wong, G., Chan, D., & Chu, S. (2006). Assessing the enduring impact of library instruction programs. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 32(4), 384–395. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2006.03.010>
- Wyatt, Mcquire, S., & Butt, D. (2018). Libraries as redistributive technology: From capacity to culture in Queensland's public library network. *New Media & Society*, 20(8), 2934–2953. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444817738235>
- Wynia Baluk, K., McQuire, S., Gillett, J., & Wyatt, D. (2021). Aging in a digital society: Exploring how Canadian and Australian public library systems program for older adults. *Public Library Quarterly*, 40(6), 521–539. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01616846.2020.1811612>

Appendix 1

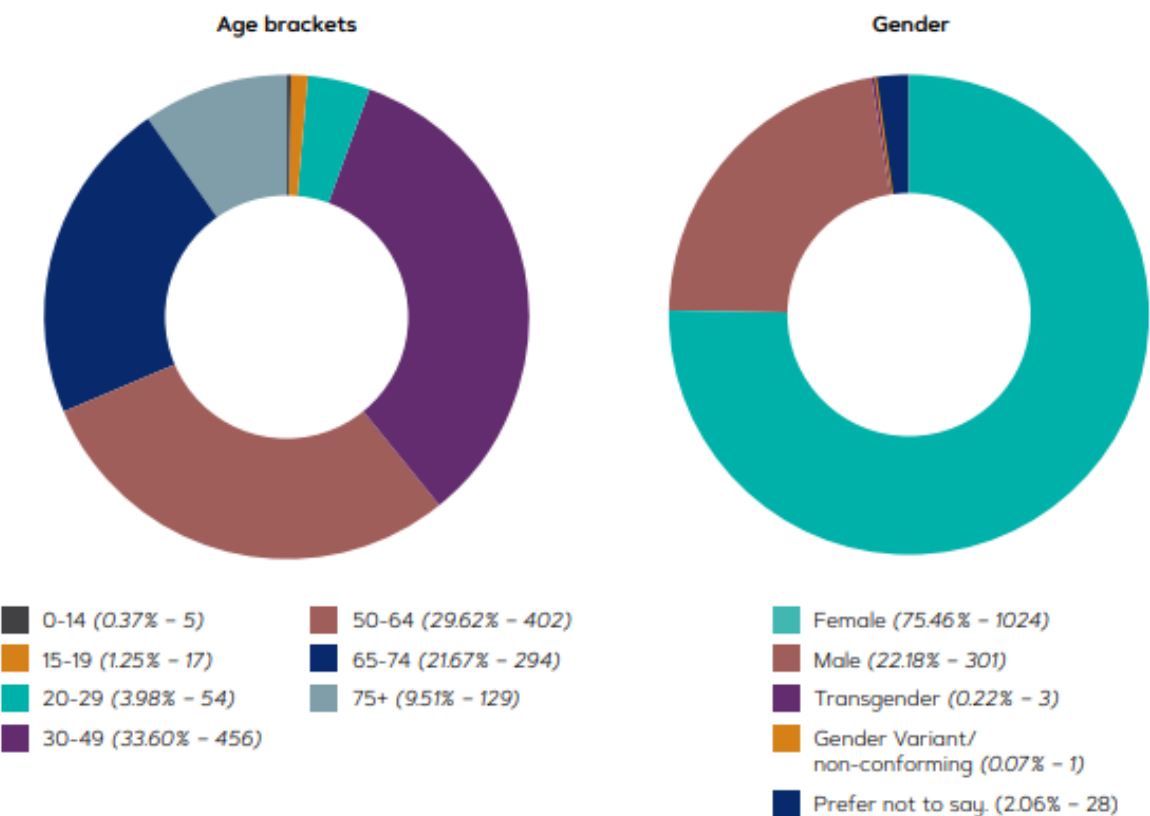
Ipswich Libraries’ Survey Demographic Breakdown

Figure 1

Ipswich Libraries’ Survey Report 2020/21 Demographic Breakdown

DEMOGRAPHICS

The breakdown of participants across age, gender, and cultural backgrounds is presented below. The majority, 75% of participants, identified as female. 33% were aged between 30 and 49 years of age. 30% were aged between 50 and 64 years of age. 74% identified as Australian.

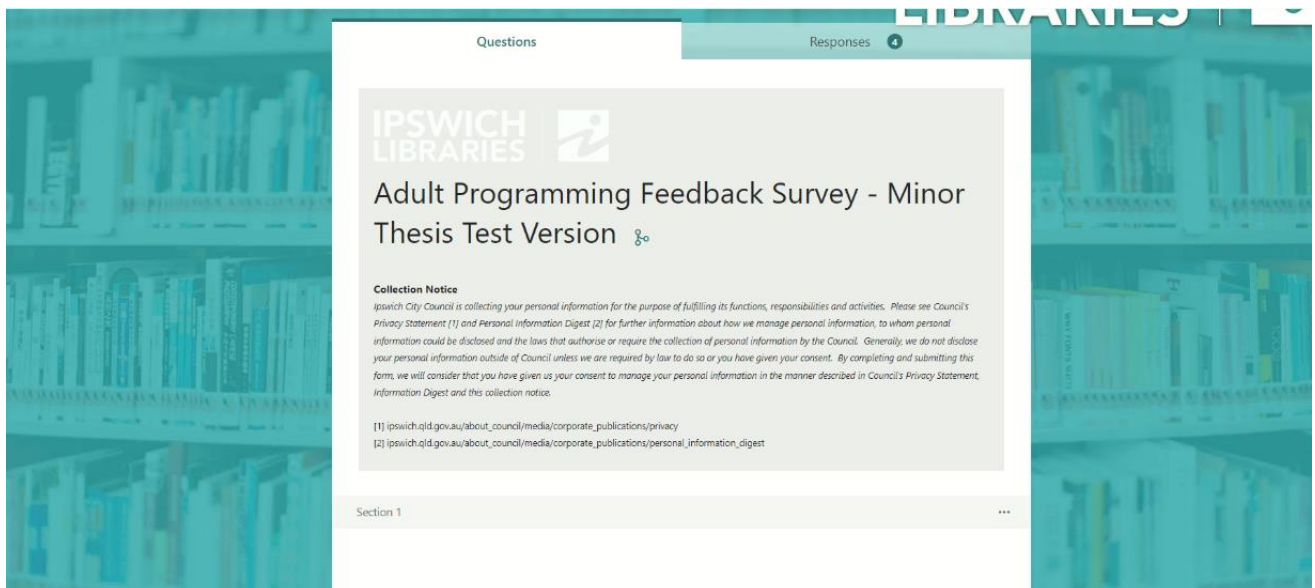


Appendix 2

Ipswich Libraries Programming Questionnaire

Link to live draft University survey - <https://forms.office.com/r/YcD6c2yjsq>

Sample Survey Questions – Section 1 Ipswich Libraries



Questions Responses

IPSWICH LIBRARIES

Adult Programming Feedback Survey - Minor Thesis Test Version

Collection Notice

Ipswich City Council is collecting your personal information for the purpose of fulfilling its functions, responsibilities and activities. Please see Council's Privacy Statement (1) and Personal Information Digest (2) for further information about how we manage personal information, to whom personal information could be disclosed and the laws that authorise or require the collection of personal information by the Council. Generally, we do not disclose your personal information outside of Council unless we are required by law to do so or you have given your consent. By completing and submitting this form, we will consider that you have given us your consent to manage your personal information in the manner described in Council's Privacy Statement, Information Digest and this collection notice.

[1] ipswich.qld.gov.au/about_council/media/corporate_publications/privacy
[2] ipswich.qld.gov.au/about_council/media/corporate_publications/personal_information_digest

Section 1

Sample Survey Questions – Section 2 University of South Australia



University of South Australia - The Value of Programming in Public Libraries

This research is to help us understand how the library community uses and feels about the library programs offered by Ipswich Libraries.

The information collected in this survey will be used by Kaley Schelks in a Master's Minor Thesis study. Every effort will be made to ensure that responses are confidential, however the researcher cannot guarantee the confidentiality or anonymity of material transferred by email or the internet.

This project has been approved by the University of South Australia's Human Research Ethics Committee (Ethics Protocol 204820).

At the end of the survey you can choose to go in the draw for a \$100 VISA Gift Card.

...

Participant Information

This is an internet-based survey. Every effort will be made to ensure that responses are confidential, however the researcher cannot guarantee the confidentiality or anonymity of material transferred by email or the internet.

You are free to decline to complete the survey or to withdraw from the study at any point while completing the survey, without affecting your relationship with the library researchers. Once you submit your survey, however, we are unable to remove your response as it will be impossible to identify your completed survey.

1. Question

- ☐ Yes, continue
- ☐ I don't understand

Next

Participant Consent Information

By completing and submitting the questionnaire/survey, you are indicating that you have read and understood these statements and give your consent to be involved in the research.

2. University of South Australia require that the survey forms be stored in a secure location for five years after survey administration. This project has been approved by the University of South Australia's Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any ethical concerns about the project or questions about your rights as a participant please contact the Executive Officer of this Committee, Tel: +61 8 8302 6330; or via email at humanethics@unisa.edu.au.

- ☐ Yes, continue
- ☐ I don't understand

Back

Next

* Required

University Research Questions

4. To understand the value of Library events.

How much would you pay for the same event if it was held by an external service provider? *

- ☐ \$10 and under
- ☐ \$11 - \$20
- ☐ Over \$20
- ☐ I would not pay for this program/event
- ☐ Not Applicable

Back

Next

5. Tell us about your/your family's experience from participating in this program/event. *

	Very true	True	Some what True	Not True	False	Not Applicable
I feel more connected to my community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I learnt important life skills.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My knowledge on a topic has increased.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I came away feeling more inspired.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was able to express myself creatively.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel more alone after attending this program.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Library programs/events are important to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I don't think this program had any benefits for me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel more connected to Ipswich Libraries.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I do not think this program was worth attending.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. The program/event you attended gave you:
(choose as many as apply)

- ☐ A sense of well being
- ☐ Confidence
- ☐ Enjoyment
- ☐ Eased loneliness
- ☐ Information/skills
- ☐ I feel worse after participating

7. We want to learn more about how communities benefit from library programs.
Can you share if this program/event has improved your life?

Enter your answer

8. If Ipswich Libraries did not provide this service/event, can you name another organisation where you could do the same type of program?

Enter your answer

9. Is there anything else that you would like to share about the value of Ipswich Libraries programs/events?

Enter your answer

Thank you so much for participating in this important research.

Your valuable time has been appreciated.

10. I would like to enter the random draw for a \$100 VISA Gift Card
Your email address will only be used in the prize draw and will then be deleted.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No thanks

Back

Submit

Appendix 3

Interviewee List - Demographics & Programs Attended

Identifier	Gender	Age range	Programs attended and discussed
Interview 1	Female	60+	FOILS/Slice of Life; Chasing our Past; Cocktail Hour/Inspiration Hour (Denise Scott, Amanda Kellar, Kurt Fernley);
Interview 2	Female	60+	FOILS/Slice of Life; Chasing our Past; Cocktail Hour/Inspiration Hour (Amanda Kellar, Kurt Fernley); Author Hour (Francis Whiting, Matthew Reilly, William McGuinness) Creatorspace (Watercolour, Ukulele, Book Folding Xmas decorations)
Interview 3	Female	60+	FOILS/Slice of Life
Interview 4	Female	60+	FOILS/Slice of Life; Chasing our Past; Cocktail Hour/Inspiration Hour
Interview 5	Female	60+	Be Connected; Tech Help
Interview 6	Male	60+	Be Connected; Tech Help
Interview 7	Male	60+	Be Connected; Tech Help
Interview 8	Male	60+	Be Connected; Tech Help
Interview 9	Female	40+	It's Perfectly Normal - Periods & Menopause; LEGO Engineers
Interview 10	Female	50+	Digital Learning - Oscar Trimboli, Author Talks, Creative workshops
Interview 11	Female	60+	Be Connected; Celebrate Japan; Creatorspace (Spinners & Weavers, Woodcrafters)
Interview 12	Female	60+	Chasing our Past; Inspiration Hour (Denise Scott, Peter Fitzsimmons, Dr Karl, Adam Liaw); Author Hours
Interview 13	Female	40+	It's Perfectly Normal - Periods & Menopause; Escape Room; LEGO Engineers
Interview 14	Male	40+	Artist Talk - Chris Trotter; First Nations Mapping; ICC initiatives (Creators of Ipswich Summit)
Interview 15	Female	60+	Chasing our Past; COPAH (great house, mid century modern) Introduction to Picture Ipswich Website

Appendix 4

Online Survey List - Demographics & Programs Attended

Identifier	Gender	Age range	Programs attended and discussed
Online Survey 16	Unknown	Unknown	Be Connected - Tech Help
Online Survey 17	Unknown	Unknown	Oceanic Watercolour Workshop, Native Birds Watercolour Workshop
Online Survey 18	Unknown	Unknown	Chasing the Past Ipswich online
Online Survey 19	Unknown	Unknown	Chasing our past at home. Great houses of Ipswich 111
Online Survey 20	Unknown	Unknown	Chasing our Past at Home: Great Houses III
Online Survey 21	Unknown	Unknown	Chasing our past at Home
Online Survey 22	Unknown	Unknown	The Great Houses Dougleen and Pen Y Llechwedd.
Online Survey 23	Unknown	Unknown	Chasing our past. Great houses of Ipswich 111
Online Survey 24	Unknown	Unknown	Inspiration Hour
Online Survey 25	Unknown	Unknown	Inspiration Hour
Online Survey 26	Unknown	Unknown	Inspiration Hour
Online Survey 27	Unknown	Unknown	Chasing our past: Writing history Galvanised Festival
Online Survey 28	Unknown	Unknown	Chasing our past, various events
Online Survey 29	Unknown	Unknown	Limestone frolics
Online Survey 30	Unknown	Unknown	Limestone Frolic
Online Survey 31	Unknown	Unknown	Preserving photographs
Online Survey 32	Unknown	Unknown	Preserving family photographs
Online Survey 33	Unknown	Unknown	Digital Device
Online Survey 34	Unknown	Unknown	Digital Device
Online Survey 35	Unknown	Unknown	Digital Device
Online Survey 36	Unknown	Unknown	FOILS
Online Survey 37	Unknown	Unknown	FOILS
Online Survey 38	Unknown	Unknown	Cocktail Hour - Todd Sampson
Online Survey 39	Unknown	Unknown	Candle Making
Online Survey 40	Unknown	Unknown	Be Connected - Tech Help
Online Survey 41	Unknown	Unknown	Pen-Pal Program
Online Survey 42	Unknown	Unknown	Pen-Pal Program
Online Survey 43	Unknown	Unknown	Pen-Pal Program
Online Survey 44	Unknown	Unknown	Pen-Pal Program
Online Survey 45	Unknown	Unknown	Pen-Pal Program
Online Survey 46	Unknown	Unknown	Pen-Pal Program
Online Survey 47	Unknown	Unknown	Pen-Pal Program

Appendix 5

Program Categories & Attendance Statistics

Category	Program Name	Sessions	Attendance	Online/In-person
FOILS	Slice of Life*	2	28	In-person
FOILS	Books for Babies* (volunteering)	1	9	In-person
FOILS	Baby Rhyme* (volunteering)	1	2	In-person
FOILS	Lunch with Friends - August	1	58	In-person
FOILS	Theatre Night - September	1	46	In-person
History Programs	Chasing our Past at Home - Great Houses III	1	41	Online + Zoom Recordings
History Programs	Chasing our Past - Writing History (Galvanised Festival)	1	25	In-person
History Programs	Chasing our Past - Limestone Frolic (Galvanised Festival)	1	56	In-person
History Programs	Learn for Life - Preserving Your Family Papers (Galvanized Festival)	1	15	In-person
History Programs	Learn for Life - Caring For Your Historical Photos (Galvanized Festival)	1	31	In-person
History Programs	Chasing Our Past at Home - Great Houses of Ipswich II	1	53	Online + Zoom Recordings
History Programs	Learn for Life - DNA and Your Family History	1	18	In-person

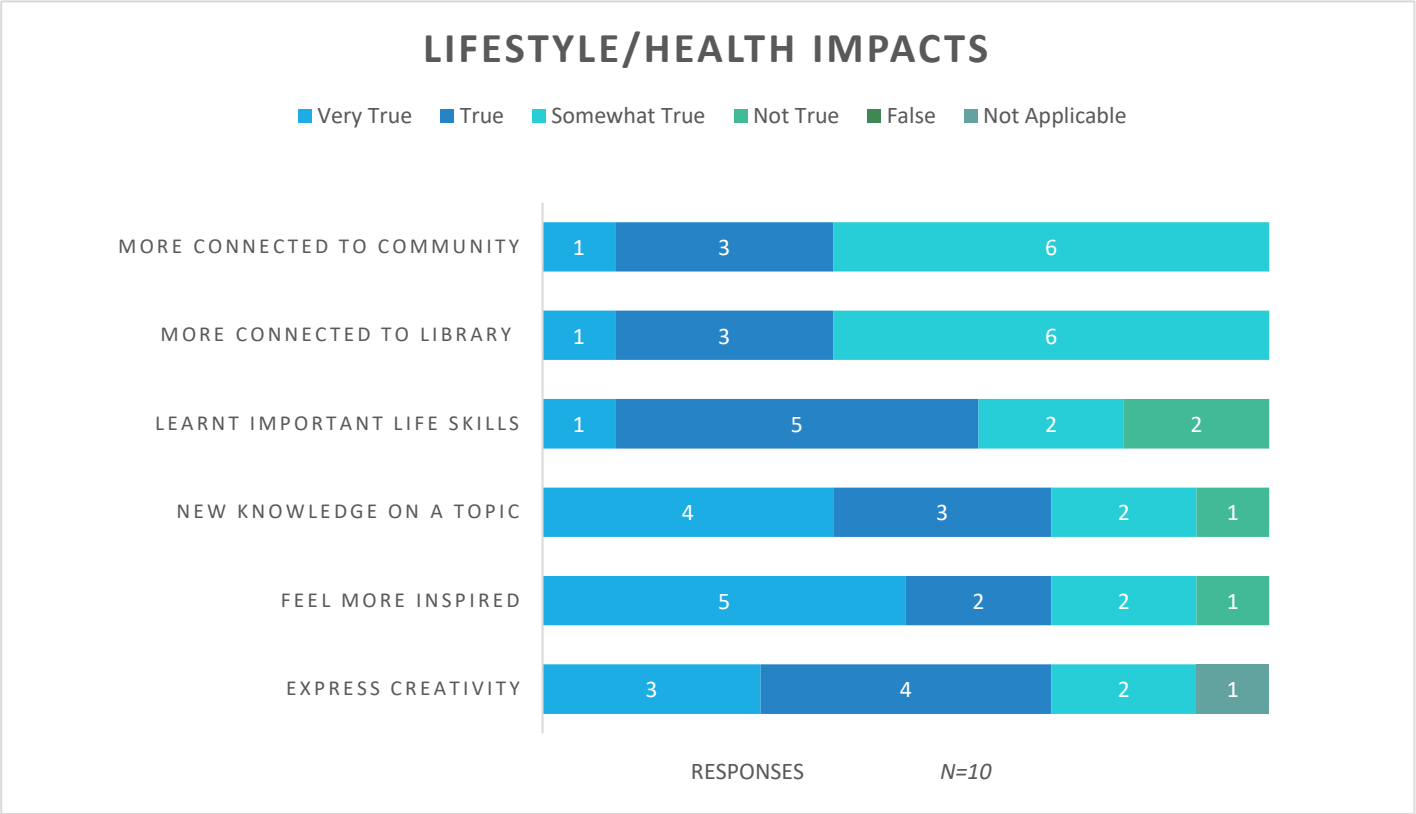
* Statistics taken for data collection period of August and September

Creative Workshops	CreatorSpace - Oceanic Water Colours	1	18	In-person
Creative Workshops	Creatorspace - Beginner Ukulele	1	21	In-person
Creative Workshops	Creatorspace - Folded Book Ornaments	1	34	In-person
Creative Workshops	Creatorspace - Watercolour Florals and Botanicals	1	18	In-person
Creative Workshops	Creatorspace - Candle Making	1	N/A	In-person
Digital Literacy	Be Connected - Tech Help*	8	97	In-person
Digital Literacy	BeConnected - Digital Devices*	2	27	In-person
Digital Literacy	Learn Digital - Oscar Trimboli	6	141	Online + Zoom Recordings
Lifestyle/Health	It's Perfectly Normal... Periods	1	31	Online + Zoom Recordings
Lifestyle/Health	It's Perfectly Normal... Menopause	1	56	Online + Zoom Recordings
Lifestyle/Health	Pen-Pal Program	N/A	128	N/A
Lifestyle/Health	Celebrate Japan	1	44	In-person
Lifestyle/Health	Escape Rooms	N/A	N/A	In-person
Inspiration Hour	Inspiration Hour - Kurt Fearnley	1	107	In-person
Cocktail hour	Denise Scott	2	342	
Cocktail hour	Amanda Kellar	1	162	In-person
An Evening with	William McInnes	1	N/A	
An Evening with	Peter Fitzsimmons	2	245	In-person
An Evening with	Dr Karl Kruzelnicki	1	N/A	
An Evening with	Adam Liaw	1	118	In-person
An Evening with	Todd Sampson	1	N/A	
An Evening with	Matthew Reilly	1	162	In-person
Author Hour	Francis Whiting	1	64	In-person

* Statistics taken for data collection period of August and September

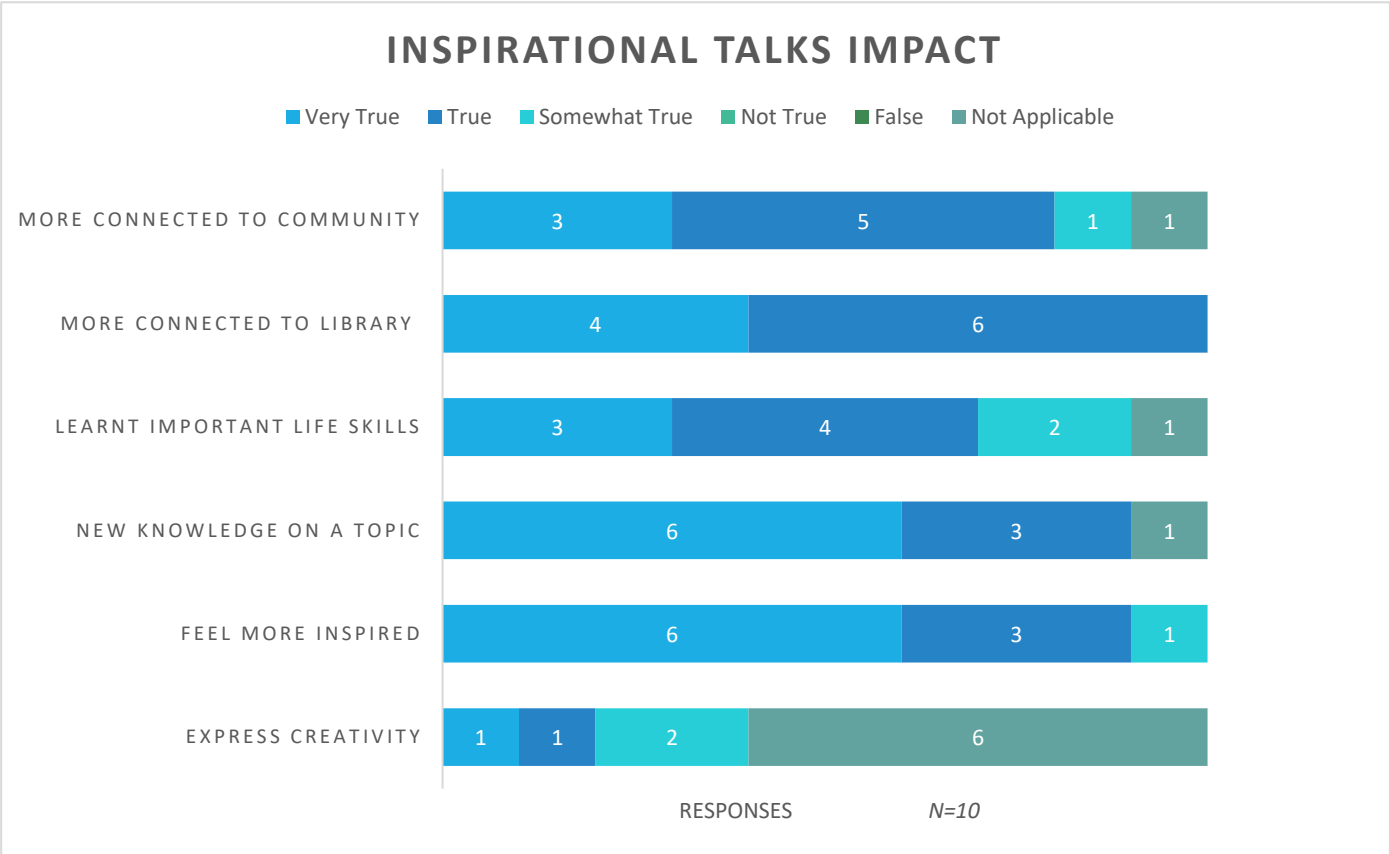
Appendix 6

Lifestyle/Health Impact Likert Scales



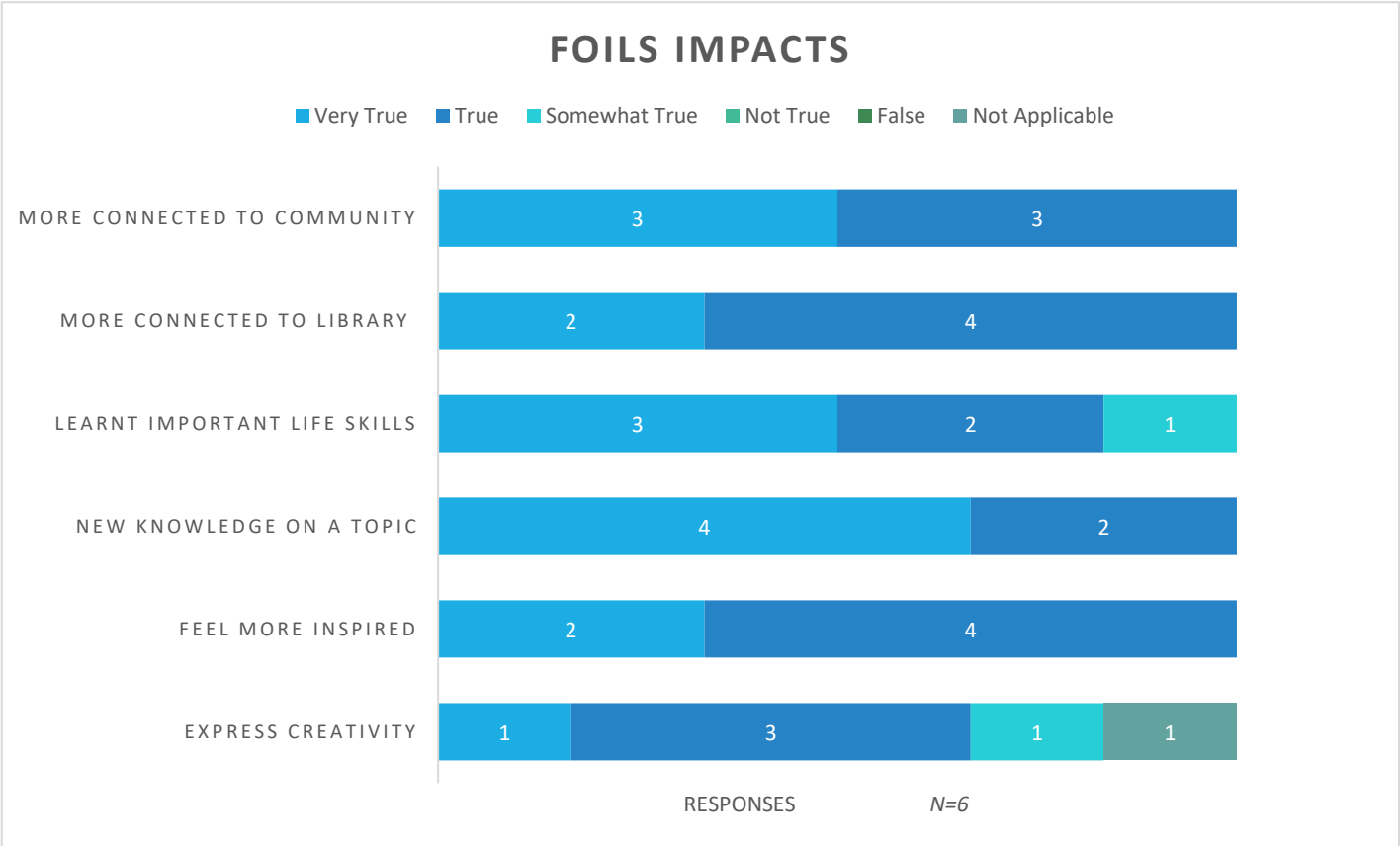
Appendix 7

Inspirational Talks Impact Likert Scales



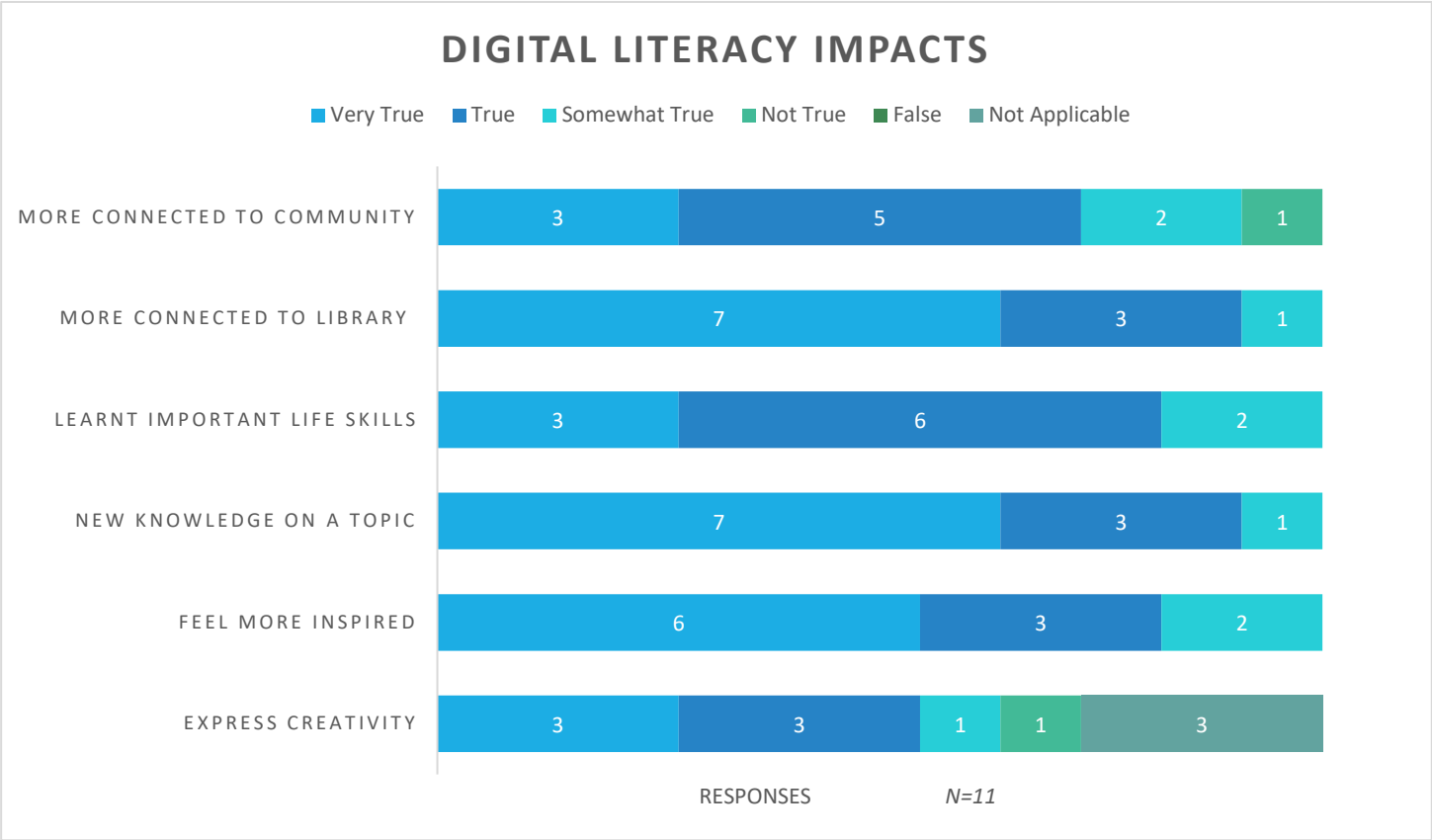
Appendix 8

FOILS Program Impact Likert Scales



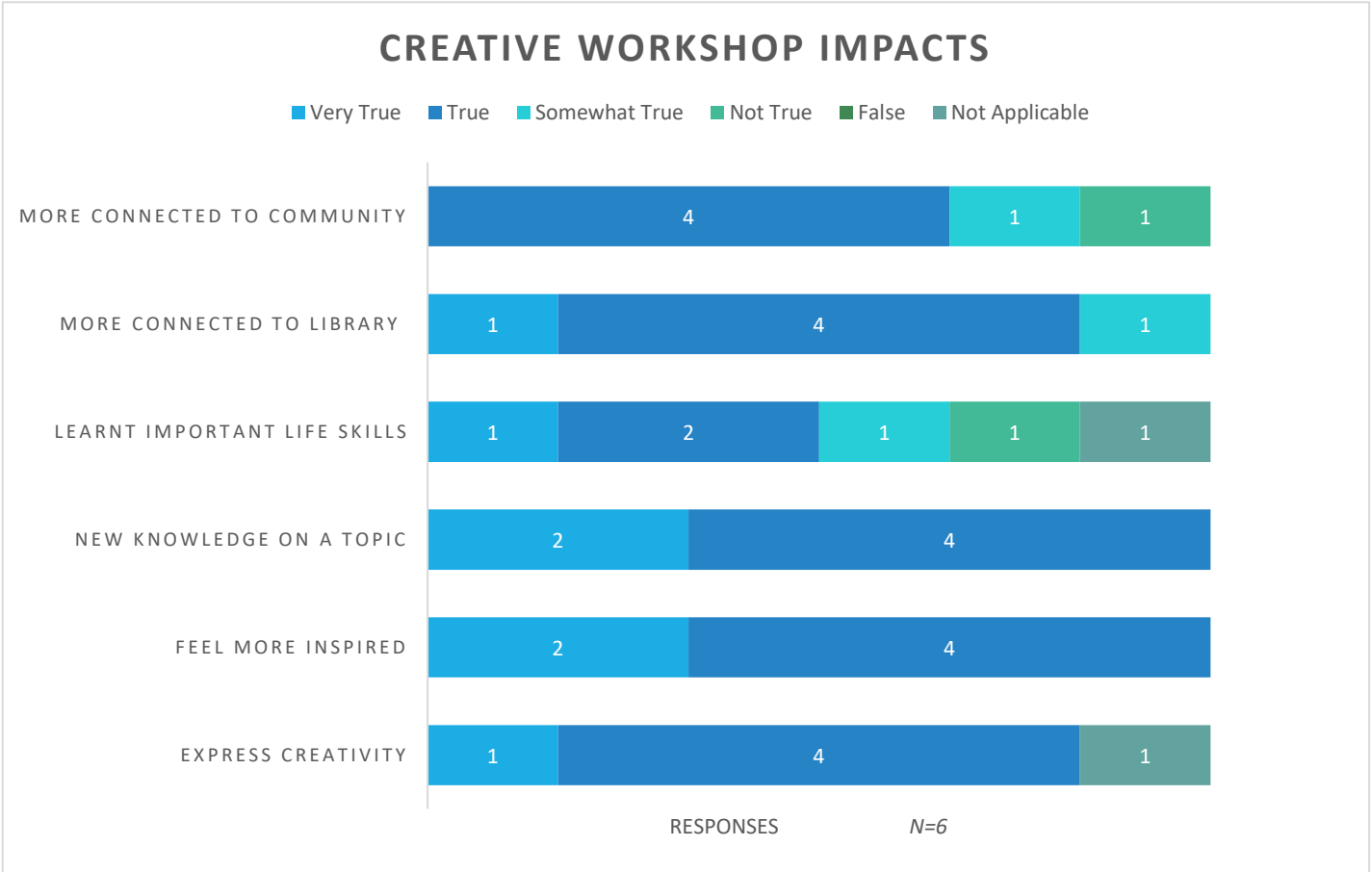
Appendix 9

Digital Literacy Program Impact Likert Scales



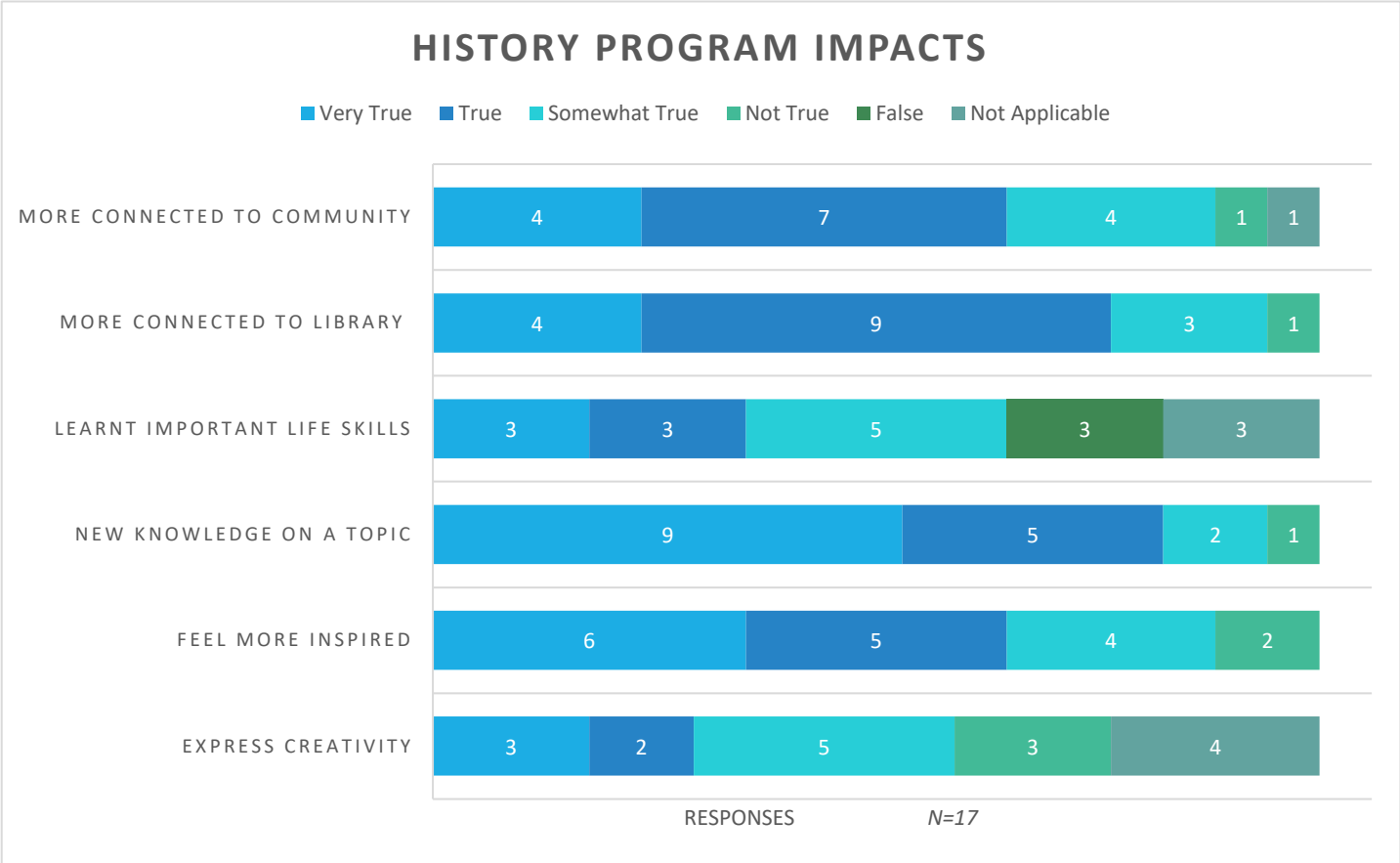
Appendix 10

Creative Workshop Impact Likert Scales



Appendix 11

History Program Impact Likert Scales



Appendix 12

Alternative Service Providers

Program Categories		Response Frequency									
n=47*	No idea	Left Bank	Other Libraries **	U3A#	Church/Community groups	TAFE/Schools	Senior Net	Historical/Genealogical Societies	Family	Online/Websites	Other Services Providers (each mentioned once by responders)
Digital Literacy	5	-	-	1	1	1	2	-	2	-	Telstra/Optus Not-for-profit support organisations
FOILS	-	-	-	1	3	1	-	-	-	-	Other Government Initiatives (Ipswich 60 and Better program)
History Programs	7	2	5	-	1	-	-	3	-	1	
Lifestyle/Health	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	Podcasts (Health programs) Pen-Pal International (Pen-Pal Program) Escape Room Private Business
Creative Workshops	-	1	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	Swell Sculpture Festival (Artist Talks and Workshops)
Inspirational Talks	1	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Books Stores (Author Talks) Science Week
Totals	15	6	6	5	5	2	2	3	2	5	

*Multiple responses therefore will total more than 100%

** Including State Library of Queensland, Brisbane City Council Libraries, Somerset Libraries, Lockyer Valley Libraries.

University of the Third Age