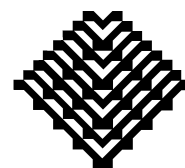# "A safe place to go"

## Libraries and Social Capital

*Sydney June 2000*

U|T|S|

University of Technology, Sydney

STATE LIBRARY OF
NEW SOUTH WALES

# "A safe place to go"

## Libraries and Social Capital

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# CONTENTS

**A Safe Place to Go**

# INTRODUCTION

We would like to thank the Public Libraries Branch of The State Library of NSW who supported and funded this project. Two of their staff were members of the Steering Committee along with members of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Technology, Sydney.

This project is part of a wider set of studies of the possible scope of social capital. The state of debate in Australia is reflected in the volume *Social Capital and Public Policy in Australia* edited by Ian Winter and published by the Australian Institute of Family Studies. While social capital is most often defined in the context of interpersonal relationships, we are also working on the attributes of public space and services that may contribute to the development of such relationships. Working from the Jane Jacob's definition of the "small change of social capital being the encounters on footpaths", we are exploring how streets, shopping areas, public buildings and other places that may be shared with strangers, can either contribute to or diminish the opportunities for developing relationships of trust.

The results of other studies suggest that those who know their neighbors, have local social contacts and are relatively experienced in social connections also have higher levels of trust in others. These people would tend to be more active in local organisations and would, on most criteria, be seen as having a higher level of social capital. Our interest in the bridging aspects of social capital places a particular importance on the operations of sites of contact, as these may encourage or discourage the capacity to extend trust to strangers and institutions.

Public libraries have traditionally offered users access to information and knowledge, as well as access to the people who assist in finding these items. For those without substantial private libraries, public libraries offer resources to match those of better endowed private citizens. Their physical structure offers a place which signifies easy access to other users, spaces for reading, and the opportunity to ask for assistance.

The value of public libraries is attested by their high usage (as recorded in ABS figures on the use of cultural institutions). They offer their services to a wide range of people, including the retired, those out of work, students and others with few resources. Many libraries have developed collections in other languages, services for people with disabilities, special support for students, and facilities and activities for local groups. Library users will often share the space with groups they do not usually encounter. In the sharing of the resources and physical space, people will meet others outside their close circles and recognise both commonalties and differences in familiar surroundings which are seen as safe space.

These possibilities for interaction are the reasons for placing importance on such services as one of the major contributors to the areas of social capital. The existence of public buildings such as municipal libraries may be seen as a public statement of governmental community commitment. Given some of the discussions on libraries and the promotion of on-line services, it is important

to explore how both users and potential users of public libraries see the physical presence of the institution.

Currently the collection of statistics on usage of libraries tends to serve the needs of the council for reporting, and of the libraries for use in information seeking. Borrowers are counted, as are the number of people in and out. However requests for information and other forms of interaction between library staff and public are more difficult to assess. There seems to be little assessment on a holistic basis of what libraries can offer as public institutions which are easily accessible to a wide range of publics. We decided to use a mixture of observations within the library, interviews with staff, and short questionnaires with users and non-users to determine how people saw and used the library building, and to explore their perceptions qualitatively.

Those who use libraries obviously value them, with about two out of three respondents stating they were very important. Those who do not use libraries were also surprisingly warm about their presence.

The following report offers a model of how one can evaluate the ways in which libraries are seen. While all libraries offered services to the community and were well regarded, some contributed in major ways to the social infrastructure, offering well used spaces to young people, to the dispossessed, to newly arrived groups, mothers with young children. Local historical groups met in some and the reading rooms were used for social encounters, child care, shelter, social contacts of isolated people and generally were seen as 'safe' spaces that is where the risks of contact with strangers might be reduced. The concept of safety has strong links with trust and the existence of places of safety. This concept is also shared by diverse groups and it is obviously important to the local ethos. While libraries will to some degree reflect the local cultures and tensions, they would also seem to offer places for the appropriate interventions to build and extend the positive links between diverse groups which signal the presence of social capital.

The pressure on libraries, as with other public institutions, to respond to economic outcomes means that issues of the significance of social relationships have slipped from public agendas. The study that follows shows that library buildings are currently and potentially important as bases for developing good relationships between diverse groups. As important areas for integrating diverse groups and developing recognition and respect for the needs of others, libraries need to be protected and extended as part of community infrastructure. However, both technology and risk, may be used to reduce the effectiveness of their social roles.

The 'safe' image of libraries is not universal in the libraries contacted. Like many other public buildings, concerns for the personal safety of workers and users seemed in some cases to affect access and increase surveillance. Yet the anecdotal evidence indicated that those with fewer safety measures generated more responsible behaviour amongst users. This raises the interesting question of how we create trustworthiness amongst users. The social capital literature suggests that trusting others may improve their behavior while policing and discipline may reduce people's sense of responsibility and self discipline.

**A Safe Place to Go**

This report recognises the contributions made by the libraries in this study and in the rest of the public library sector and hopes its recommendations will let the public sphere grow.

Eva Cox      *The Civil Circle*, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences,

# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## 1.1 BACKGROUND

The aim of this project is to investigate how municipal libraries can, and do, contribute to the production of social capital in the communities in which they are located.

Social capital is accumulated as a by-product of those interactions which contribute to a community or group sensing that their access to an institution, such as a library, enhances their functioning within the wider society. In turn, those spaces which provide social capital possibilities contribute to the cohesive social fabric, even though they may not be recorded or recognised.

The production of social capital in libraries can be correlated with the ways in which diverse needs are accommodated. This includes the ability of the library to provide shared space for diverse groups within the community (eg. those identified by various ages, ethnicity, disability, education levels). It also includes the library's ability to facilitate conflict solving, demonstration of respect for others' needs, the adherence to rules with minimal policing, and other indicators of socially responsible behaviour. Additional indicators are the ways books and resources are treated, the ways in which people talk to each other, assist each other, and accept those in the community who are known to be difficult and different.

## 1.2 CORE/NON-CORE BUSINESS

Libraries, as with other institutions, are identified in terms of their core business, and evaluated through performance measurement, usually in terms of economic benefits. These however do not account for the range of integrated functions libraries perform which extend well past the provision of books and information. These additional functions are often unaccounted for and unrecognised in any formal ways.

In available studies of community library usage, the ways in which libraries function as community centres is notably under reported. These include patterns of regular usage, (ie attendance and using the space, rather than borrowing rates or information seeking activities), and various formal and informal activities that draw people to the library.

In this study community activities within libraries differ in both scope and frequency. Some libraries have the space and resources to run substantial programs, others fit them into odd spaces, and others still are more limited. Whatever public space was available is seen as meeting space, point of contact, and refuge by various users. Some of the functions observed, and those users recounted, include educational and social functions, and provision of community services.

## 1.3 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

This study found that libraries are not only acting as a communal gathering place, where many diverse members of society can feel relaxed in each other's company, some are also acting as

**A Safe Place to Go**

outreach centres. The invitation to participation is an important part of the construction of social capital. With the closure or downgrading of many social services, together with the introduction of the user-pays principal, many libraries have taken on the role of a focal point for communities.

## 1.4    TRUST & SAFETY

Perhaps the most important finding in this study is that most libraries are felt to be safe places where high levels of trust operate. This perception was present in all libraries, but at different levels. This feeling of trust was reciprocal between staff and users and between different groups of users themselves. Most libraries have few formal security measures and encounter very few problems. Those libraries with the most liberal attitudes, and the least formal security measures, paradoxically also encountered the fewest problems. Attitudes to what constitutes breaches of behaviour vary from library to library, but most libraries are more relaxed than the outside environment.

## 1.5    USERS

This study also found that older retired people, and young (school age) children, are the major users of libraries during the week day hours.

Both groups use the library as a source of information and a place to borrow books, but it is also an important component of their social network. For the young it can be an entrée into a broader community, a place where they learn to read, as well as interact with their peers and learn about the world at large. For the elderly it is a significant social outing where they gain important social interaction and human contact. This is especially true for those living alone.

> *It is an outing. It has helped a lot since I lost my husband*
> *12 months ago.*
> > … older library user

The extent of the use of libraries by youths was an unexpected finding. Youths are not generally perceived to be high library users, nevertheless they make up a major segment of the library community. Academic study is a core part of library business, especially for HSC students. Many youths also use libraries as a place for social contact, meeting friends and flirting in a safe but unchaperoned environment.

## 1.6    ACCESS BY OTHER GROUPS

A unique feature of most libraries is the absence of a sense of exclusion, or a concept of "other". There is an almost universal perception that libraries are places where all people have a right of access, regardless of their circumstances or backgrounds.

In most libraries resources are provided specifically for different groups within the community, and many provide materials in the first languages prevalent in that community. The heritage of free use and the public ownership of libraries mean that nobody is turned away, and users feel

that all others have a right to be there, creating a sense of equity and entitlement, and thereby neutralising any sense of marginalisation or exclusion.

## 1.7   NON-USERS

In a survey of passers-by, the overwhelming majority felt strongly that it was important that the library was there and that access was maintained for all.

**Passers by survey. Question 4.**
**How important is it to have the local library there?**

**Importance of library**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | very | 129 | 68.6 | 68.6 | 68.6 |
| | quite | 31 | 16.5 | 16.5 | 85.1 |
| | 9.00 | 28 | 14.9 | 14.9 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 188 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

9.00 = invalid

Awareness of the local library amongst non-users was high, with most able to identify its location and many having at least considered using it. Just knowing the library is there and available to the community is important.

## 1.8   RESOURCES

Library staff are recognised as a library's most important resource, even though they are often undervalued. Libraries are social places, and the relationship built up between staff and users is an important part of the social experience of library use.

Some libraries face dilemmas in their staff requirements, with conflict between the demands of professional development, and the need for staff to be consistent, available, and appear friendly and approachable. By placing emphasis on improvement of professional skills, rather than the social aspects of the job, the sense of community trust and continuity seems to diminish. A growing emphasis on economic management of libraries means that the very important social benefits derived from staff interaction with the public are considered difficult to evaluate. Consequently public interaction may be considered irrelevant or unimportant and is not valued as a core activity.

## 1.9   THE BUILDING & SPACE

The designation of areas within libraries for different purposes creates specific spaces for certain users while allocating other areas as communal space. Designated spaces not only influence the type of group using them, with others feeling it is a no-go area for them, but it influences behaviour as well. For instance more private spaces within the public area encourages quiet interaction.

**A Safe Place to Go**

The sharing of public communal space within libraries can serve to increase trust and tolerance of difference between groups within a community. Often public spaces such as shopping centres are deemed to be only for certain groups, where youths are moved on. Within most libraries, the elderly and youths, which otherwise have negative impressions of each other, share space without incident.

The findings of this report show that libraries function to enhance social interaction and trust, and that they foster equal access and a sense of equity within the community in which they are placed, which in turn contributes to social capital.

We would therefore strongly recommend that any evaluation of the worth of local libraries needs to record and assess the significance of their major social functions such as offering space, opportunity for social contacts and activities. It is these encounters and the basis for positive experiences of strangers and others which assist in the making of relationships of trust which are the core of social capital.

## 1.10    RECOMMENDATIONS

This report recommends:

I That libraries themselves consciously advocate and articulate the recognition of their social role within a community as an important site which has value, including by its physical presence.

II That libraries explore ways in which they can increase their visibility and reach within a community as part of the social structure of shared space and interaction for people from diverse backgrounds living together.

III That library reports on the business of libraries include in their research and analysis some accounting of factors which enhance the ways libraries contribute to the social capital of a community.

IV That trust-building be seen as a core function of local libraries so that libraries will actively be part of developing local community capacities, particularly in areas where lack of social capital is affecting the resilience of networks and capabilities for collective problem-solving. This would require serious work on the use of space and the staffing resources which encourage appropriate activities for inclusivity and social cohesion.

**A Safe Place to Go**

# 2. METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of this study ten public libraries were selected from the Sydney suburban and New South Wales rural areas. Since the participating libraries were assured of confidentiality it is not possible to name them.

Information was gathered through three means. Observation of the libraries by the researcher taking notes; two different surveys – one of library users inside the library, the other of non-library users or passers-by outside the library premises; and recorded interviews with library staff. The same three methods of data gathering was used in all libraries. SPSS (Statistical Program for the Social Sciences) was used to analyse data collected from the surveys.

## 2.1 BACKGROUND

Information science literature increasingly recognises the way social factors influence library use and community perception. Some identify this as the "affect" or the emotional response people have to library use, but there is little hard data collected due to the difficulty, time and costs associated with its documentation. Many of the studies to date concentrate on information retrieval, or communication difficulty between the user and the librarian, rather than the user perception of the role of the library in their daily life (Kulthau 1991, Ingwerson 1992). Others concentrate on user satisfaction, with many studies demonstrating that user expectations influence perception and user expectation usually matches outcome (Ryker, et al 1997). Overall the growing interest in user-centred studies in information science means the growing importance of investigations which evaluate a library's value to the community and the individual using more than library records or economic factors. The theoretical concept of social capital can be used to investigate further social factors.

Over the past decade the emergence of the concept of social capital has come to be considered by some to be the essence of what makes social systems work. Unlike the neo-liberal paradigm, which presupposes humans make decisions based on economic self-interest, social capital is measured in terms of social well-being, and is used to describe the collaborative cooperative working together for mutual/common good, that makes us social beings.

Social capital is not generally produced through specific targeted activities but as a by-product of experiences, both brief and ongoing, which reinforce or produce trust of other people and institutions. Adequate levels of interpersonal trust allow people to work collectively, and it may also extend past advantaging the intimate groups. The bonding of local groups, which encourages bridging relationships with other groups, can be used for the common good, and so can be defined as creating social capital.

The exact nature of social capital and its modes of production are still being debated. However, for the purpose of this study we examined how the library, as an institution and a building, provides spaces for people to share experiences which engender trust of the library itself, the staff, and the broader society. The emphasis in this study is not on the processes of information

retrieval, a core function of libraries and the focus of most research studies of libraries (Wilson, 1997), but a consideration of other ways in which libraries function as public spaces.

## 2.2   LIBRARIES

The ten participating libraries were selected on the basis of their similarities and differences, thereby enabling both comparison and contrast between them. All except two suburban libraries were central libraries. The small number of libraries in this study means they are not a representative sample of all libraries in the state of New South Wales but rather a cross-section of the total.

Seven of the libraries are located within the Sydney metropolitan region selected from areas that would provide a wide variety of socio-economic backgrounds and a geographical spread. The metropolitan libraries surveyed service populations ranging from 36,000 to over 200,000, with the areas containing between 2 to 8 branches.

The remaining three libraries are located in rural towns. The rural libraries in this study are central libraries. They are to the north-west, south and west of Sydney, in communities with populations which range from nearly 40,000 to over 80,000. Each of the regions in this study has a number of small branch libraries servicing up to 130,000 people. While experiencing the same problems as many rural and regional towns, at the time of our study none were undergoing upheavals which would directly affect library usage or community attitudes to the library.

Three of the libraries in this study were new (refurbished within the last decade) and purpose built, the remainder were older and some were housed in previously convenient locations (near community facilities) which had long been outgrown.

The libraries chosen were in areas ranging from very low to high rates of unemployment and education participation.

The majority of library management was willing to participate and assist in this study. Some needed to seek council permission and took this upon themselves. They provided assistance to the researcher when ever possible. Those reluctant to participate sometimes reflected a more closed library culture.

## 2.3   DATA COLLECTION

The researcher, as a non-identified observer within the library itself, took notes throughout the observation period. It was originally proposed that three one hour observation periods per library would provide adequate data. However it was found that this gave a limited view of total library usage. During the study the observation periods were extended to four to five hour periods over two days. This amendment allowed a better understanding of the way in which library use changes during the day and the flow of group interaction.

Observation periods were limited to weekdays between opening and 5pm. This means the study has a bias towards those able to visit the library during those hours, ie the retired, out-of-work,

**A Safe Place to Go**

children (including school-age and pre-schoolers), at-home parents and other carers. Those at work during the day would not be reached unless they were able to access the library during their lunch break or had time off. While this does limit the results of the study, we feel that there were enough different groups of people using the library during the observation times to enable an analysis of community structures and usage. As only some were open after hours it also made the observations more comparable.

Two types of surveys were administered by the researcher – the user and non-user survey.

The user survey asked questions of users within the library in order to ascertain emotional response to the library visit, the frequency and purpose of library use, and with whom the respondent might interact socially during the visit (79 were completed). The non-user survey targeted non-library users and passers-by in order to gain insight into knowledge of the library, sense of identification with the library, and general perceptions of the library's importance in the community (188 were completed). Survey results were entered into SPSS and analysed.

In addition to observations within the library and surveys, interviews with library staff were also conducted. Extensive one-on-one interviews were undertaken with two staff members from each library. In one library only a group interview with six staff members was conducted.

Staff for interview participation were selected by the Library Manager. The only criteria for selection were that the staff worked directly with the public in the library. All agreed to participate after being told the purpose of the interview. Selected staff members had been employed in the relevant libraries for periods ranging from 6 months to 20 years and included a mix of full and part-time staff. Only one of the staff interviewed was male. All other participants were female which is consistent with the high rate of female staff in libraries overall.

**A Safe Place to Go**

# 3.    THE FINDINGS

## 3.1    EVALUATION OF CORE AND NON-CORE BUSINESS

In the past outcomes for public libraries have been based on measurement of numbers of members, circulation figures, collections, and other statistical information. These figures are quick and easy to collect, providing quantitative data for documents such as funding applications, grants, and annual reports.

Some libraries have attempted to measure activities, such as information requests which require subjective judgements. Collecting this information relies heavily on the staff having available time, or remembering to make note of all such requests. One annual report indicated that a particular library dealt with a total of 42,138 such requests for information over a twelve month period. This example indicates that core library services, such as information requests, are difficult to measure and quantify by their sheer number alone.

While there have been attempts to quantify the role libraries play in community development, most available reports have used economic criteria. The dominance of economic theory, and the necessity to explain advantage in dollar terms alone, has meant functions on which no dollar value can be placed, or for which financial analysis produces meaningless results, have been ignored.

This report aims to examine the social value of core and non-core library business which contribute to the well-being of the community and society in general, and to evaluate the need for their continued maintenance without using economic criteria. Such social value may be achieved through policies of open accessibility, an underlying sense of security, and the library's physical presence. In these ways the library makes a contribution to equity and social justice within the whole community.

## 3.2    DEMOGRAPHICS

### 3.2.1   Who uses the library and when
Libraries are utilised by a diverse cross-section of the population. They are a place where many groups, who would not otherwise mix in broader society, integrate.

> *I have always sought out libraries and used them no matter where we have been.*
> … older user

The major users of public libraries are the elderly (27.8% of users surveyed were over 60 years of age) and school children/youth (24% of users surveyed). This information is also gleaned from extensive statistics on membership, circulation, and so on. Since it is difficult to quantify users who do not necessarily borrow, the breakdown of the users may in fact be biased.

A Safe Place to Go

**Sample of library users. Age breakdown.**

**age**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | 10-14 | 2 | 2.5 | 2.5 | 2.5 |
| | 15-19 | 15 | 19.0 | 19.0 | 21.5 |
| | 20-29 | 11 | 13.9 | 13.9 | 35.4 |
| | 30-44 | 17 | 21.5 | 21.5 | 57.0 |
| | 45-59 | 10 | 12.7 | 12.7 | 69.6 |
| | 60+ | 22 | 27.8 | 27.8 | 97.5 |
| | 9.00 | 2 | 2.5 | 2.5 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 79 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

9.00 = invalid

The elderly and schoolchildren use the library both at different times and together. These two distinct groups are often segregated in broader society, sometimes expressing contempt, or even fear, of each other. These feelings of mistrust are particularly evident between youths and the elderly outside library premises.

While elderly users sometimes plan their visits to avoid high usage times by children, often the two groups, if not exactly mixing, do share the same space. Sharing the same space encourages a sense of harmony and trust, diminishing feelings of mistrust which pervade the broader society.

### 3.2.2   Youth
Youths are not high on the membership and borrowing records so are thought to be low library users. Observation contradicted this.

> *Usually come to the library to look for jobs in the*
> *newspaper and study.*
> … student

Youths appeared to be high users in all the libraries where observation took place. Those between the ages of 15-19 accounted for 19% of those users surveyed. Attendance was ostensibly for study related purposes but socialising with peers was also part of the purpose of their visit. Not only do teenagers socialise with their friends while studying, some use the library specifically to meet friends, or to flirt with potential partners. Some library staff reported that teenagers, particularly those from protected backgrounds, come to the library to meet friends away from parental supervision. This is particularly true for teenage girls who are not otherwise allowed to go out unsupervised. Thus the library acts as a safe haven for them to socialise.

Young girls in particular find the library a safe environment in which to meet friends of both sexes. Parents also seemingly regard libraries as safe environments and have no hesitation in allowing their offspring frequent access. This, in turn, increases their social network and provides opportunities to broaden contacts:

**A Safe Place to Go**

*And a lot of them actually tell their parents that they're
going to be at the library, sort of an excuse too, they say to
their parents* 'I'm going to meet so and so down the
library' *and so their parents know that okay, they know
where they are, they know that adults are around sort of
thing, so I think that's part of the reason too. And a lot of
parents know that if their kids are down at the library they
assume they'll be okay down there.*
… staff member

The individual library attitude influenced the pattern of library use for youths. Some libraries ignored their presence, and consequently, did not provide services for them. Others actively discouraged youths from utilising the library. This is achieved through a variety of measures such as constantly quietening them; using video surveillance in areas in which they sit; and utilising security measures, such as council ordinance workers and police officers who wandered through the library at irregular intervals. These libraries reported having the most trouble with youths.

Some libraries provided services specifically for youth, such as HSC resources and quiet areas in which to study. These libraries had high usage by young users, and tended to leave these users to themselves much more than other libraries. Quiet interaction was encouraged, and ample, comfortable areas were provided for them to work in. These libraries also reported the least trouble with youths.

### 3.2.3   Older users
The elderly are high library users. Not only do they account for the majority of book borrowing, a core usage, but also they often use the library as a social outing.

*Sometimes for the wife, other times just to look around.*
… older user

The importance of the library to older people is evident in the cross tabulations of frequency counts for age and importance of the library. Within the 45-59 year old age group 75% of those within the group said the library is very important to them compared with only 56.3% of those within the 15-19 year old age group. This percentage increases in the 60+ age group where 79.4% claim the library is very important to them. 68.6% of all users surveyed said that the library is very important to them.

Every library surveyed reported high usage of reading areas, particularly by older men who sometimes form "newspaper groups" and for whom a visit to the library becomes a social outing. Older retired users reported that visits to the library formed part of their social activities, often combined with trips to the shops or to pay bills. In one library that is close to an RSL club, patrons reported visiting the library to return books on their way to play bingo, and then returning to the library to obtain a further supply of reading material. During the return journey they would also chat to library staff about their luck at bingo, combining both visits into the one social activity.

**A Safe Place to Go**

> *Quite a lot. It's convenient for them to go to bingo, and at*
> *least one day in the week come and get their library books*
> *rather than making an extra trip. So we quite often have to*
> *mind books while they go and do their shopping. They*
> *have to rush in to bingo first because they have to get their*
> *seats by 9.30 and we're not open yet. Sometimes they'll*
> *come here after bingo, and then they'll go shopping and*
> *then come back and pick up their books.*
> … staff member

For many older users the activity of the weekly library visit is a central event for the whole family.

> *I borrow for my 90 year old mother*
> … older female user

> *They will let me take out a lot of books because I live out*
> *of town and only come in once a fortnight. I do all my*
> *shopping and everything else.*
> … older user

The social aspect of the outing seems to be as, if not more, important as the ability to obtain reading material to many older users. Staff in all libraries reported forming relationships with older, regular users, noticing when they did not come in at their usual time and inquiring about their health and well being. Almost all libraries reported that older users came in stating that they had ventured out just for a chat or to get out of the house.

> *One man lost his wife about 12 months ago and we'd had*
> *a few days of rain and he came up and I said* "What are
> you doing out in the rain?" *and he said* "I was so lonely. I
> thought if I go for a walk up the library, my friend up there
> will have a few words with me." *He just wanted the*
> *contact with somebody.*
> … staff member

Perceptions of youth as a possible problem affects library users. While in the majority of cases older users utilise the library in the mornings, at a time when youth usage is low, this is usually for their own convenience rather than a desire to avoid contact with the youths. However, there are instances where staff have suggested to older users that they stay away from the library at times of high usage by young people, thus creating a perception that youths and children are to be avoided. While there are often good reasons for this, such as overcrowding and increased levels of noise, one consequence of this advice could be that the groups maintain a level of distrust for each other. When library staff were asked whether older members complained of noise levels during periods of high usage by children and youths the answer was "No".

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**A Safe Place to Go**

### 3.2.4   School Children

School children are high library users. Not only is it a place to access resources, but it also seems to provide a place of safety and security in the after-school period. Many libraries have high numbers of unaccompanied children who arrive at the library following school and stay until picked up by their parents or older siblings. For many of these children the library is a more secure environment than an empty house. Libraries seem to be places working parents regard as safe, and where they trust their children to wait. Libraries also have public telephones allowing children to communicate with parents, thereby putting parents at ease and making them feel they are in touch.

> *Some come in to borrow the books …. Then there's some that just socialise, just sit around and talk. We've got the public phone out near the circulation desk and that gets used a lot*
> … staff member

> *Come sometimes for homework , borrowing or for leisure or projects*
> … female parent

Libraries also take on the role of community centres in the way they care for children, with staff in some libraries reporting children have been left until library closing time. It appears that many libraries act as alternate child-care centres. There are various reasons for this which may include the high cost of child care, inappropriate operating hours of the child care centre, lack of adequate services, or even the child's own wish for independence.

In some libraries the numbers of children are so high that some libraries are considering developing policies to deal with cases where children are left after closing time in order to protect staff from possible accusations of improper conduct.

> *Child care. It really is. You notice it more in school holidays. We get a lot of kids here 10-5. Around 5 o′clock they′ll drift off home because they′ll get picked up by the parents. And it′s not a problem generally, but it has the potential to be a problem, and it′s more like we worry here about our responsibility to the kids too. We can′t look out for them all.*
> … staff member

There is some disagreement between library staff members and supervising libraries as to what constitutes a "left" child. Even within the same library some staff members will report that many children are left after school, while others feel that the children are just there to study or do homework, and thus come of their own accord. Attitudes of staff members strongly influence how young (primary age) children are treated and accepted. If individual staff feel the children

are there for legitimate purposes they are more accepting of the children and provide appropriate services for them. However, some resent feeling that they are being used as a child minding centre. This resentment does not seem to rest on how the children behave within the library, with reports of bad behaviour by some who come in to do homework and borrow books, as well as good behaviour by those who seem to be left.

Where adequate and affordable child care services are provided within the area, and where it was felt that parents could afford to utilise the service, some staff reported that those services should be used, rather than children being left in the library for extended periods. In the libraries in lower socio-economic areas staff appeared to be more sympathetic to parents who might not be able to find appropriate care.

A number of libraries provided services such as homework assistance. This feeds into the traditional use of libraries, but also encourages children to remain in the library unaccompanied by parents, while also encouraging parents to accept the safety and appropriateness of the library as a place for their children to be in unaccompanied. A few libraries reported providing food for children who are in the library for a number of hours after school, as well as taking telephone calls from parents checking on children, and in some cases driving children home.

> *One of them comes in and waits for her sister, so she's only here for about 2 hours. The other day when I walked out she came running over to me and she put her arms around me and said "I missed you", and I said "Why did you miss me?", and I realised I had the day off before. And I said to her "How was school?", and she said "Not very good because I feel sick", and she just wanted a cuddle because she didn't feel well and I was probably the only one around she knew well enough to ask for a cuddle.*
>
> … staff member

Staff often reported how they developed close relationships with some of the children. One staff member described herself as acting like a god-parent to one child who she had initially met in the library in the after-school period. This relationship formed within the library had developed into driving the child home after closing time, sometimes staying on to dinner and socialising with the child's family. While these sorts of close relationships were rare there were a number of reported incidences of staff and users exchanging birthday presents and other gifts, making enquiries about family members, and keeping track of each others health and personal problems.

Libraries in lower socio-economic areas, which perhaps have fewer resources, or where it is felt that parents might not be able to afford child-care, appeared to be more accepting of large numbers of children after school. In higher socio-economic areas, or areas where there were other adequate children's services, some staff felt that the library was not an appropriate place in which to leave children.

### 3.2.5 The shelterers
Libraries are also often used as 'shelters' by a variety of social 'misfits'. Mentally or physically disabled people use the library either by themselves or with carers. Carers often feel that libraries are places in which their charges can venture with safety, and not encounter trouble they cannot handle.

> *We have somebody who comes in on Saturday morning and he's got Downe's Syndrome. I think he's between 30-40 years of age, and he just comes to the library and types out some words for himself on the word processor. But he comes here because the library is a safe place for him to come, and it's his little bit of independence from his mum.*
> … staff member

Homeless people, those living alone or in boarding houses, also appear to use libraries as a shelter and, in addition, a source of social contact whether users speak to each other or not. Some users come in on a regular basis – daily or weekly – for an extended period to just sit and read, before they even speak to anybody else in the library.

> *The regulars come in often. Certain ones come in every day to use the newspapers and things. There's one guy I've noticed since it's been colder, he's been coming in every day I think to get in out of the cold. Whether or not he has a home I don't know. He doesn't look homeless, tattered and that. But we see most of the regulars at least once a week or twice a week.*
> … staff member

It seems that libraries are seen as safe places in which those on the fringes of society can ease themselves into a fuller participation within society.

This sheltering aspect of the library was not confined to those on the fringes of society. In one library the parking police used the library's staff room to eat their lunch in so as to escape the general public.

### 3.2.6 Transients
Library users may alternate between periods of high library use and low or non-use.

> *I used to come here years ago and now I'm coming back.*
> … transient user

This is particularly true of parents who were young library members and are now returning with their own young children.

**A Safe Place to Go**

Library staff reported that many transient users come to the library on a need-to-know basis, recognising the library as an important information provider, even if they are not sure that the library has the information they need. For instance information about tenant rights, or other legal or social welfare matters may encourage users to return with the perception that the library is the place to find information, even though they might not be regular users.

> *It's good to think that he would think that this as a place*
> *for information. He had been a member of the library*
> *before he told me, and he hadn't been here for years, so it*
> *was with this initial need for information that he came. So*
> *he had been a member, so having had some contact with*
> *us he knew that he could get some information.*
> ... staff member

Some might come in on a regular basis for specific information purposes, such as job-seeking.

> *A lot of unemployed people come in and check the papers*
> *every day. There's about 10 regulars that come in first*
> *thing in the morning just to go there, sit in the nice chairs*
> *and read the papers, that's always ... On a Monday*
> *morning a lot of them ask for the employment section and*
> *read through that, but yes the newspapers are really*
> *popular, even the back issues are used a lot too. It's hard*
> *to keep tidy but at least we know they're being used and*
> *that's good.*
> … staff member

These casual users are always incorporated and the experience often encourages them to return again. Some staff reported people using the library on a one-off basis who said they were thinking of using the library because they used to be members. Some of these joined up and continued their use.

Overall satisfaction gained from transient library use reinforces the community perception that the availability of the library is important to the community.

### 3.2.7   Other groups' access
One of the unique aspects of most libraries is the absence of an "other". When people are treated equally, with equal right to use, and are afforded equal respect, there is little possibility of a *them versus us* situation arising.

Within libraries resources are allocated to all. Special children's sections; large print books; audio books; videos; school study resources; newspapers/magazines; community language books; etc, mean that all can be catered for. Observations, and staff comments, suggest that where resources are provided they are utilised, giving many people access to libraries. One of the

**A Safe Place to Go**

survey questions asked participants who they felt libraries were for. 98.7% of all surveyed users agreed that *they are for everybody and that everybody can have equal access.*

When a library is perceived to be predominantly for one group within a community, questions may arise in people's minds about their "right" to use it, and whether it operates as a community library. This may be a problem when considering co-locations with other institutions with lesser acceptance by the community. Consequently community use drops overall, and any community development function is overridden by the perception of the rights of the main group. This creates a division between the main users (us), who see it as their library, and everybody else (them), who feel excluded. In this situation endowing the privilege of entry implies that users must accord with the main users rules.

### 3.2.8   Comment

It is this ability to tap into the needs of the community, and accept all individuals as equally deserving of attention and acceptance that appears to be a strong guiding principle for libraries. When asked how staff members deal with problem people, they respond with a strong sense of acceptance. Staff members feel that as libraries are public places, all members of the community have a right to use and a right to be treated well by the staff and other users. This sense of community ownership of the library directly affects the staff/user interactions, with some staff reporting that users have a right to good treatment regardless of who they are.

Transgressions often have to be extreme before they are censured. Many people who might be on the fringes of society because they speak in a loud voice, smell, are a transvestite, or have an unusual general appearance, and in short are sometimes labelled "abnormal", are accepted in the library. They experience less discrimination than they do in the general community. Public attitudes towards the library, as well as staff attitudes to people, blend to create a "safe" place for all.

> *..... you just deal with them quickly - don't try to*
> *antagonise them - be polite, etc.*
> … staff member

### 3.3   THE SPACE AND FEEL

Individual libraries have a certain "feel" that is evident on entering the building, While this feeling is hard to quantify there are a number of factors contributing to it, including space, colour, noise, cleanliness, order and light. Variations in these combinations contribute to a *successful* library or ones that stand out as *wrong*.

> *It is vital that the library is there but it should be bigger*
> *and upgraded.*
> … older user

Even so some libraries have limited natural light and are cramped, yet they work well. Others which have been purpose built are not as successful.

### 3.3.1 Separate space

The allocation of space to certain groups within the library creates "no-go" areas for certain users and other spaces which are perceived of as public space. While the usual intention of this segregation is to allow activities such as pre-school story telling it can also have the effect of isolating some users from the rest of the library. The children's section, in particular, is generally perceived to be only for children where they are free to make noise. It also confines children. This can then serve to keep child carers from utilising the rest of the library, particularly if children are required to be supervised at all times.

### 3.3.2 Quiet space

Libraries also have areas set aside as 'quiet' space (usually in the reference book areas). In some libraries there appears to be a hierarchy of quietness, with the most serious space for research being sacrosanct, thereby reinforcing the traditional role of the library as a place of information seeking and study. In other areas 'quiet' noise is permitted.

The need for a quiet space often takes second place to social use. Interestingly, mobile phones did not appear to cause the same level of concern that they do in other public spaces such as movie theatres. The attitude in libraries seems to be that as long as phone conversations were kept low, and made brief, they are acceptable. Some libraries even had space where mobile phones were allowed and others where they were not.

> *We don't consider it a problem. They don't ring a lot and*
> *where I sit at my desk out the back you can hear them*
> *ringing quite often but people are very good about going*
> *up the top or outside to talk.*
> … staff member

Some spaces are designed to be comfortable places in which to just sit, read and relax. These spaces are the most utilised of all and for the longest periods. In some instances they encourage the mixing of groups of people, particularly those that come in to read the newspapers. Some libraries report groups of older men come into the library in the morning and read the newspapers together, although they do not necessarily mix together outside the library. For some users, widowers in particular, accessing these group areas seems to facilitate their major interaction and activity outside the home.

It would seem therefore that these quiet areas are integral to the functioning of the library and its ability to act as a communal centre for all members. The areas are utilised by people of different ages and backgrounds, particularly when newspapers and magazines in community languages are provided. Some people, particularly older men, report using them as a waiting area while their wives/friends are out shopping or otherwise engaged, and for others it is a daily outing to the library to read the newspapers. Unemployed people often come in to read the job advertisements, others just to sit and relax. Some, as previously reported use the areas to sit and converse with other users, perhaps increasing their social circle outside the library as well.

**A Safe Place to Go**

### 3.3.3 Private space

Some libraries also set aside private spaces which encourage quiet interactions and give a sense of privacy and intimacy. Comfortable chairs or lounges in quiet corners, or behind shelves, encourage individuals or small groups of two or three to sit and converse quietly, or read/study together. In some libraries these spaces are so quiet and relaxing that some people were observed falling asleep while sitting. While there are also reports that these quiet spaces are used by youths to socialise and meet up with members of the opposite sex, most library staff do not consider this a problem as the couples are generally quiet and well-behaved. Those libraries which lacked private spaces were also the libraries which reported the most noise and disruption particularly from youths.

### 3.3.4 Lack of space

The majority of libraries reported a lack of space to set out specific designated areas. While this is indeed a problem, since libraries are always in the process of increasing and updating collections, and providing increasingly diverse services, one of the most successful community libraries was also one of the smallest.

This library had very few comfortable chairs and the children's section was at one end of the one room housing the library. Quiet study places were very few, and very small. The library was old, crowded, and very noisy.  It had the highest usage by school children, as well as high general community use. Set in a multi-cultural community, all members were encouraged to use the library, and there was provision of community language resources. What it lacked in space it more than made up for in exuberance.

All community members were treated equally, and while different groups did not necessarily mix within the library, they did share the space. Older users did not leave the library when school children arrived, although noise levels increased dramatically. The library made the most of its space by providing areas for different uses - cushions in a corner, chairs by shelves, work-stations behind a partition. Although it was virtually impossible to "get away" from other users there was a feeling of being semi-isolated within the crowd. Staff members were also from the local area adding a further dimension to community understanding.

### 3.3.5 Increased space

All libraries which had increased their physical size also reported increased usage, particularly in newspaper and other reading areas. One library expanded its lounge area from 2 seats to 18, and the new area was constantly in use, with up to 11 people observed sitting and reading at any time, even though the library was going through a particularly quiet period. Staff reported that during busy times all seats were utilised.

> *There was only, say, two lounges in the old building, and*
> *now there's 16 or 18, which are very well used here, so it*
> *just shows that by providing the space and the opportunity*
> *people are happy to come and sit and read in the library.*
> … staff member

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**A Safe Place to Go**

Even within the same library there can be spaces that work well, and are well utilised, and those that do not. Almost all libraries have a newspaper section, with comfortable chairs and easily accessible papers and magazines, where people are encouraged to linger. These are not necessarily quiet places. Some incorporated tea and coffee supplies which encouraged people to sit and converse. These sections are almost universally well utilised, although not all users are necessarily members of the library and therefore might not appear on any membership statistics.

### 3.3.6   Toilets

One of the strongest indicators of how the libraries in this study dealt with issues that arise is the management of use of toilets. In many of these libraries toilets were locked, and staff had to be asked either for a key, or to release the door.

One library, as well as locking the toilets, had blue lights within which gave users a sense of nausea and headache. While these measures were undertaken in order to deter drug injection (making it difficult to locate a blue vein), other users reported a reluctance to use the toilets. In this case not only were there unintended consequences, but possibly merely a moving of the problem from one area to another.

> *Since* [implementing the new security measures] *we've found a needle behind the books in the reference section, and also we found one under an area where a guy had been.*
>
> … staff member

For older users locking toilets may mean that they are unable to stay in the library as long as they might wish, particularly if it is cold. Older users often feel embarrassed about announcing their desire to use the toilet by asking staff for a key and would rather curtail their library visit. This is an unintended consequence of a focus on possible incursion.

Two other libraries in this study dealt with drug issues by providing a sharps bin in the toilet. Staff from one library indicated that it kept library patrons safe from needle stick injuries while providing a safe place for addicts, who could, on the whole, be relied on to do the right thing disposing of their needles safely and not harassing other patrons.

### 3.4   THE RESOURCES

### 3.4.1   Staff

The most important resource within a library is its staff. Not only do they have a knowledge of the library itself, its contents and other local resources, but they also know and understand the local community. Most libraries are aware of the value of their staff, and staff generally report good working conditions such as maternity leave and the ability to work part-time and flexible hours.

Librarians have a traditional image as dowdy and old fashioned, so are trying to increase their professional standing. Library staff are now required to be multi-skilled, providing reports to

**A Safe Place to Go**

council, taking on new training and re-skilling, and keeping abreast of changes in technology, information theory and government legislation. There is however a danger that this approach will result in a less friendly and welcoming atmosphere and will make users feel alienated.

The majority of libraries did not provide staff uniforms. This seemed to emphasise a more informal relationship between staff and users, where the users feel that staff are just like them and that they could be friends rather than customers.

### 3.4.2 Relationships

Libraries are social places. Staff report that users often have a chat when they come in, and some come in primarily for that purpose. For older people in particular, visits to the library serve a social function. More than half of those users surveyed (55.7%) attended the library by themselves. When one branch library in a particular area was closed for rebuilding after a fire, older users complained that they missed the building itself, and the social purpose it used to serve.

Users build up a relationship with library staff, which was reciprocated, and sometimes carried over into social life outside the library.

> *Sometimes during Book Week when we have colouring*
> *competitions or story competitions I've had competitions*
> *left on my doorstep at home. No knock or no note or*
> *anything, just OK well, I'll take them into the library.*
> … staff member

> *The adults always say hello too. The older, retired people*
> *speak to you more. They ask how our kids are. Most of*
> *them have seen us get married and have babies, and stuff,*
> *so they'll ask how our kids are. But they're lonely and*
> *that's their interaction too.*
> … staff member

Length of service within an individual library enhances the staff knowledge of library users and local issues, so builds individual relationships which spread into the broader community. This may be an important part of the acceptance of libraries by groups not necessarily comfortable with libraries, and may be particularly important in areas with low levels of social capital.

### 3.4.3 Rotation between branches

Libraries where staff are rotated between branches do not have the same close links to the community as those where staff have stayed in the same branch a long time. Staff are aware that they will be moving on, and while dedicated to their jobs, this awareness seems to place a greater emphasis on the professionalism of the job. However, because of their short tenure in one branch, this can be at the cost of the social importance of the library.

*It's to increase staff knowledge so that people don't get stuck doing the same job. It's good because if you don't like it where you are you know you're only there for a year or two depending on your position. But it also increases staff skills. But then there's the other side that people mightn't like it …. You're just getting to know what you're doing and you've got to move on and start all over again.*
… staff member

Libraries face a dilemma. The staff must foster an appropriate professional image and, at the same time, maintain close and friendly community relations. This schism is felt more strongly in some libraries and by some individual staff members. Since financial reward is linked to increasing skills and status within the profession, pursuit of career can present a quandary for some. Many staff members state that one of the great joys of their job is dealing with the public and fostering close links with the community. Users often stated that one of the things they liked about the library was the staff.

### 3.4.4 Connections with area
Many libraries have local history displays, photographic collections, displays of artwork etc from local schools, or photos taken of local events. These serve to make a connection with the community, who recognise this link when they enter the library, creating a sense of ownership and belonging.

Use of library space by community groups for events, displays, even the commissioning of art, also enables the community to feel part of the library. The community not only uses library resources but has an input to the use of the space.

While events such as *Book Week* and school activities are accepted parts of library use, libraries are now also encouraging other members of the community to utilise the library facilities for activities such as organisational meetings and other functions, not usually considered traditional library activities.

In addition, services such as the establishment of local history repositories and genealogy centres increasingly place the library in a central role in the maintenance of communities. The provision of exhibition space for local history or art displays reinforce this perception. Indeed some libraries report acting as a local information centre, with people coming in off the street with queries about the local area, and some asking for directions.

*We quite often get community information questions … So you'll quite often get people coming in here and saying can you give me directions, or where is so and so, and that sort of thing. I think that the library seems to be the obvious place to come to.*
… staff member

**A Safe Place to Go**

A knowledge of local services, or those which are lacking, within the community also enables the library to provide an extension of these services.

### 3.4.5   Outreach services
Libraries can also extend into the community by actively pursuing connections. As well as advertising its meeting or display space, libraries can organise events centred around the library and involving the local community in order to foster the connections. One library in the study organised a trivia night which was held within the library itself, utilising the library resources to find information. This not only drew together members of the local community, some of whom had not previously used the library, but also gave them knowledge of resources within the library and how to find them.

## 3.5   BUILDING TRUST & RELATIONSHIPS

### 3.5.1   Talking to staff
Most interaction in libraries is between staff and users, rather than between users themselves, indeed some people seem to come in specifically for that interaction with the staff. While being able to borrow books is obviously important to many people, it is often only part of their visit to the library, which can also be part of a social outing, with the library being an integral part of their social life. This is particularly true for elderly people, for many of whom the library is part of their social routine. Of all those users surveyed 98.7% agreed that they asked staff for assistance in the library, and 68.4% agreed that they talked with staff.

### 3.5.2   Talking to each other
It was interesting to note that while most users surveyed (59.5%) stated that they did not meet or talk to other people within the library, many then proceeded to do so, either starting conversations with strangers or greeting those they knew. Brief greetings, smiles or other non-verbal signifiers, even requests for assistance, do not seem to be considered as "talking to other people". They are however important aspects of the building of social capital and trust of other people.

### 3.5.3   Acceptance of others
One informant told of a group of youths who pulled into the library car park in a small red car. Then they got out of the car and started skateboarding in the car park. Nobody approached the youths, nor did they harass or intimidate anybody else, yet the mere act of the young men skateboarding was seemingly enough to convince a passer-by that there would be trouble and a council ordnance officer should be called. However before this happened the youths put their skateboards away and entered the library. Merely by entering the library the perception of them had changed from threatening to acceptable, and the previously intimidated passer-by was even able to talk to them and share a joke.

### 3.5.4   Disciplining and Policing
As previously mentioned in many libraries policing is kept to a minimum. This means that less behaviour constitutes transgression and therefore there is less punishment.

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**A Safe Place to Go**

As the traditional use of libraries is for study and reading purposes, noise can be an issue, however levels of noise within libraries vary from quite loud to very quiet. Noise from different groups was also felt differently. Youths were often perceived to be unacceptably noisy, while young children, although also very noisy, were not only tolerated but encouraged. Youths and young children were often seen as the only two groups that required disciplining.

Other types of behaviour, which would be unacceptable in most other places, were often more tolerated in libraries. These behaviours could range from voyeurism, haranguing of staff, loitering, etc. The most common staff response to such unacceptable behaviour was to respond to their requests as quickly as possible so they would leave as quickly as possible. Those who chose just to sit and do nothing in a library were allowed to do so, unlike in many other semi-public places such as shopping centres where they would be asked to move on.

### 3.5.5 Safety

A neighbourhood survey conducted by BBC Consulting (1997, pg. 3) found that 65% of their sample felt safe within the community. However our research found that almost all users and non-users felt that libraries were very safe places with only 1.3% disagreeing they were safe places.

**Library users survey. Question 10.**
**Do you agree with the following statements about the library?**
**It's a safe place to go**

**safe place to go**

|  |  | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | agree strongly | 48 | 60.8 | 60.8 | 60.8 |
|  | agree mildly | 1 | 1.3 | 1.3 | 62.0 |
|  | disagree | 1 | 1.3 | 1.3 | 63.3 |
|  | 9.00 | 29 | 36.7 | 36.7 | 100.0 |
|  | Total | 79 | 100.0 | 100.0 |  |

9.00 = invalid

The issue of safety was such an important and often mentioned aspect of the study that a question was added to the survey. When asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement that *It's a safe place to go* almost all respondents answered "Yes", many with added emphasis.

The way incidents are handled affects this perception of safety within the library. Breaches of conduct may be treated as mere incidents or as punishable problems affecting the way behaviour is handled.

Harsh security measures decrease the level of trust and feeling of safety. Locking toilets, placing notices warning of thieves, and use of surveillance cameras can in fact act to reduce the feeling of security in many environments.

**A Safe Place to Go**

Users and non-users alike did not score safety highly in those libraries which instituted strong security measures into their areas. Those libraries in this study with strong security measures noted that trying to subvert security was a badge of honour for some. Removing security tags from books and placing them in another's bag, walking in and out of alarm monitors carrying books, or trying to surreptitiously remove secured items from the library, were some of the activities noted. This acted to counter some library's attempts to provide a secure region.

Those libraries studied which reported high levels of trust and low levels of problems, had no formal security measures at all. These libraries seemed to become a "no go" area for vandalism and/or crime even though there was some theft. Incidents involving drugs or sexual harassment were treated as transgressions rather than crimes, allowing them to be quickly hosed down, subverting any "folk panic".

In fact many library workers report that they do not have any problems with either the users or use of the library; when questioned further they do admit that they have had drug usage, theft, sexual harassment, and other issues which in other places constitute either "problems" or crime. It seems the perception and handling of the incidents directly affects the library staff and users perceptions of feelings of safety within the library itself.

It is not clear from our investigations why the perception of libraries as safe places is universally accepted within communities. Some have suggested it has something to do with the 'feminisation' of those environments, but it is an area that requires further investigation and is beyond the limits of the present study.

## 3.6    INSTITUTIONAL ISSUES

### 3.6.1   Awareness

Passer-by questions were designed to establish awareness and knowledge of the library based on factors such as education levels, occupation, interest in daily news and current affairs, and depth and amount of reading.

Questions were intended to establish how *important* the general public felt the library was, and their knowledge of services provided by the library. All passers-by answered that the library was important or extremely important, even if they did not use it themselves. 93.6% of passers-by also agreed that the library should provide equal access for all, 88.3% found it personally useful and only 4.8% of passers-by surveyed did not know where the library was. Their attitudes to the library were also compared to their attitudes to the local council. Antipathy to the local council did not negatively impact on attitudes to the library. This result was not unexpected based on previous research. Responses are also affected by the assumption that some participants will answer questions in a way that will show them in the best light, or the way they think you want them to answer. Even so knowledge of libraries, and a belief that they are very important to the local community, is very high.

Cross tabulated figures were also able to show that there was also a noticeably high percentage – 82.9% – of country library users who rate the library as very important compared to respondents in the city, 68.6% of whom rated the library as very important.

Library staff felt the support of local council was extremely important. Not only did this support help them to do their job properly, it was important in ensuring the provision of adequate resources to the public. Non-supportive local councils resulted in poor resources, reduced hours of operation, and staff feeling insecure. Staff also often felt that not being associated with the council in the minds of patrons was a bonus. This perception did not appear to be borne out by user surveys which showed that negative perceptions of the council did not reduce positive perceptions of the library. Most knew that the council was responsible for the running of the library.

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**A Safe Place to Go**

# Appendix I

## I.  CONDUCTING YOUR OWN SOCIAL CAPITAL AUDIT
##     IN A LOCAL LIBRARY OR BRANCH

During our research we were asked by a number of libraries how they would go about doing their own social capital audit. The following activities and measures have been developed from this and other studies we have undertaken as part of both social capital measures and social and ethical audits. This broader research is part of ongoing work on the concept of triple bottom lines, that is the measurement of financial, ecological and social effects of organisational activities. They are included here as a list of possible ingredients to wider assessments of library functions and are not intended to be prescriptive recipes.

We suggest that libraries examine their current data collection systems and, if necessary, add further social capital measures to them on a one-off or a regular basis. One of the stronger findings from this study was a concern libraries have about staffing and resourcing levels, and the need for constant reporting with an emphasis on the economic bottom line – that is numbers of people, and financial costs of services. While we recognise staff and time constraints for further investigation, we suggest that the research itself could be used as part of the development of social capital within the library by utilising local researchers or students, perhaps on a volunteer basis. Libraries often have student placements from local TAFE colleges or universities who could be utilised to undertake research and reporting. Once a system is established it could be integrated into current systems to minimise extra effort.

As is apparent from the following suggestions, the most important factor is to set benchmarks. Knowing what you want to find out, and why you want to know it, is the most important part of conducting the research. This clearly establishes what you are doing well as a library, and the areas which could be improved. Some of these will vary according to the location and the emphasis of each individual library but a number of core factors remain constant. We have selected three areas which we feel are integral to the social functioning of libraries and these can be added to and varied according to individual needs.

### I.I  RELATIONSHIPS AND TRUST BUILDING

**Set benchmarks**
What level of trust do you have in your users, and in particular, those subgroups amongst them? What level of trust would you like to have and how do you intend to encourage this? How much time and effort do you want to spend getting to know users and developing group or individual connections which may further enhance trust? How much time, money and staff resources do you want to spend on security measures? What is the standard level of loss of material and other forms of dishonesty or theft that you want to set as standard?

**Measuring trust and norm and rule adherence**
This can be done both by observation and surveys as well as by keeping good statistics. What are the reported thefts, loss of books etc., and how much of this is due to accident/forgetfulness by

users or staff. What are the ways in which people 'mind' bags and purses in the space? What happens in the toilets? What security is installed and does it work for the stated purpose or does it have unintended consequences? What examples are there of vandalism, fights or other anti-social behaviour? Do people use the space at night? What are the volumes of complaints about noise and bad behaviour? Are these consistent with reality or do they mask another problem? Who volunteers assistance?

Compare and see how these match expectation.

## I.II INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY

**Set benchmarks**
Who do you want to serve and in which ways? Are there age groups, particular cultural or community groups, people with disabilities, school children, students and researchers you think should be using the space?

**Start watching and counting**
Look at the membership and compare it with local population (from the census). Observe not only how many, but who uses the place. Are there groups which are not using the space? Who are they and why are they not there? Use small surveys at local organisations to see why some groups are not coming. Look at activities and how they express the ethos of the community. Check other facilities and see who uses them.

## I.III SOCIAL USE OF SPACE

**Set benchmarks**
This is about how you feel the social interactions in your library should be. Should people use it as rest space, seeking information, meeting each other, using the space to read/socialise/seek company. How much interaction is appropriate? Do different groups seem comfortable using the space side by side, or do they tend to avoid each other? What expectations do you have of use of the space *vis a vis* borrowing and returning material. This should be done over a period of a couple of weeks by library staff and those in sponsoring organisations related to the library.

**Measure what is happening and see how they match your benchmarks**
Count readers, visitors, and researchers, that is those who use the space to do homework, to look up references, to meet friends and/or socialise while studying but don't necessarily borrow. Record those who read papers, sit and chat, wait for parents or others, listen to music, use the equipment, etc. but do not borrow or return books. Record those who chat to the staff or each other, even just exchange greetings, watch to see how people walk around and maybe acknowledge others. Much of this can be done by observation for brief identified periods or playing back video tapes if these are not overwritten.

**Compare expectations with measures**
Decide what you feel is the most important aspect of the social use of libraries. This will give you some indication of whether changes need to be made to make people feel more welcome,

**A Safe Place to Go**

and whether unfair demands are being placed on staff or users. It will also help you ascertain whether outreach services are required to draw in particular groups who are currently under utlilising library services.

## I.IV    THE IDEAL LIBRARY

As has been mentioned throughout this report, what works well in one library does not necessarily work in another. Characteristics of place and population need to be considered when deciding how to set up a library. However, there are a number of factors which we can describe as being important in creating an atmosphere within a library. We list these here with the proviso that an absence of one or a number of factors will not necessarily lead to any lack within the library itself, nor will the inclusion of other variations. This list is by no means extensive, and each library will need to decide what is important to them, and what sort of atmosphere they want to create.

### Staff

The most important resource of any library is its staff. Those libraries where staff were drawn from the local area, and knew and cared about the local area were the most effective community libraries. Length of service within a library in all cases added to the perceptions of staff being welcoming, caring and knowledgeable both about the library itself and the community generally.

### Ambience

Use of colour is important in setting a mood. Warm, muted colours seem to provide an atmosphere that is welcoming but not overwhelming. Lighting should be natural wherever possible. Large windows and sunny aspects where people can sit comfortably and read or converse. While one large area for reading/conversing is important in enabling the development of networks amongst users, smaller, quieter seating behind/between/near shelves or quiet corners allows users to be able to sit quietly and read on their own, or just to think or watch. Hard, upright chairs near shelves also allow less mobile/active users to sit while browsing. All chairs should be moveable rather than fixed in position, creating a less formal atmosphere.

### Security

An interesting finding of the study was that the less security within a library, the greater the trust that was generated, and the fewer problems encountered. This is in line with other studies which indicate that people generally act the way they are expected to – if you trust them they respond well to that trust whereas if they are treated as criminals or otherwise deviant they will act that way. The creation of trust and a perception of safety seems to be very important to the operation of libraries as community centres.

### Collections

Collections are as individual and varied as each library. However where collections respond to the needs and interests of the community, with resources including newspapers and magazines in community languages, local history/genealogy collections, and information based on community strengths and interests, there is a greater possibility of attracting a more eclectic range of community members.

## Appendix II

*In all tables 9.00 = invalid response*

## II.I  *Survey of library users*

**age**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | 10-14 | 2 | 2.5 | 2.5 | 2.5 |
| | 15-19 | 15 | 19.0 | 19.0 | 21.5 |
| | 20-29 | 11 | 13.9 | 13.9 | 35.4 |
| | 30-44 | 17 | 21.5 | 21.5 | 57.0 |
| | 45-59 | 10 | 12.7 | 12.7 | 69.6 |
| | 60+ | 22 | 27.8 | 27.8 | 97.5 |
| | 9.00 | 2 | 2.5 | 2.5 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 79 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**Sex**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | male | 30 | 38.0 | 38.0 | 38.0 |
| | female | 48 | 60.8 | 60.8 | 98.7 |
| | 9.00 | 1 | 1.3 | 1.3 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 79 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**Education**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | high school | 39 | 49.4 | 49.4 | 49.4 |
| | TAFE/trade/other | 18 | 22.8 | 22.8 | 72.2 |
| | university/college degre | 18 | 22.8 | 22.8 | 94.9 |
| | 9.00 | 4 | 5.1 | 5.1 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 79 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**A Safe Place to Go**

**Occupation**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Unemployed | 2 | 2.5 | 2.5 | 2.5 |
| | Parenting/home duties | 12 | 15.2 | 15.2 | 17.7 |
| | Student | 21 | 26.6 | 26.6 | 44.3 |
| | Trade/labourer | 3 | 3.8 | 3.8 | 48.1 |
| | Personal services/sale | 12 | 15.2 | 15.2 | 63.3 |
| | Professional | 7 | 8.9 | 8.9 | 72.2 |
| | Retired | 21 | 26.6 | 26.6 | 98.7 |
| | 9.00 | 1 | 1.3 | 1.3 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 79 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**City/Country**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | City | 46 | 58.2 | 58.2 | 58.2 |
| | Country | 33 | 41.8 | 41.8 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 79 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**Location**
**Not included so libraries are not identified**

**Question 1.**
**Do you live and/or work in the area?**

**Live/work in area**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | yes | 78 | 98.7 | 98.7 | 98.7 |
| | no | 1 | 1.3 | 1.3 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 79 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**Question 2.**
**If you do not live in the area why do you come to this particular library?**

**Why come to library?**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Live/work in area | 78 | 98.7 | 98.7 | 98.7 |
| | other | 1 | 1.3 | 1.3 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 79 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**A Safe Place to Go**

**Question 3.**
**What do you like about living and working here?**

**What do you like about living here**

|       |             | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | everything  | 9         | 11.4    | 11.4          | 11.4               |
|       | convenience | 8         | 10.1    | 10.1          | 21.5               |
|       | environment | 30        | 38.0    | 38.0          | 59.5               |
|       | family      | 10        | 12.7    | 12.7          | 72.2               |
|       | other       | 13        | 16.5    | 16.5          | 88.6               |
|       | nothing     | 5         | 6.3     | 6.3           | 94.9               |
|       | 9.00        | 4         | 5.1     | 5.1           | 100.0              |
|       | Total       | 79        | 100.0   | 100.0         |                    |

**Question 4.**
**Do you come to the library often?**

**How often come to library**

|       |                   | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | daily/weekly      | 48        | 60.8    | 60.8          | 60.8               |
|       | fortnightly       | 15        | 19.0    | 19.0          | 79.7               |
|       | monthly           | 11        | 13.9    | 13.9          | 93.7               |
|       | less than monthly | 5         | 6.3     | 6.3           | 100.0              |
|       | Total             | 79        | 100.0   | 100.0         |                    |

**Question 5.**
**Who do you usually come here with?**

**Who come with**

|       |              | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|--------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | self         | 44        | 55.7    | 55.7          | 55.7               |
|       | spouse       | 3         | 3.8     | 3.8           | 59.5               |
|       | child/ren    | 10        | 12.7    | 12.7          | 72.2               |
|       | other family | 9         | 11.4    | 11.4          | 83.5               |
|       | friends      | 8         | 10.1    | 10.1          | 93.7               |
|       | other        | 2         | 2.5     | 2.5           | 96.2               |
|       | 9.00         | 3         | 3.8     | 3.8           | 100.0              |
|       | Total        | 79        | 100.0   | 100.0         |                    |

**A Safe Place to Go**

**Question 6.**
**Do you usually use the library for something specific or just general browsing?**

**Come for something specific or general**

|       |         | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|---------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | general | 25        | 31.6    | 31.6          | 31.6               |
|       | specific| 28        | 35.4    | 35.4          | 67.1               |
|       | both    | 22        | 27.8    | 27.8          | 94.9               |
|       | 9.00    | 4         | 5.1     | 5.1           | 100.0              |
|       | Total   | 79        | 100.0   | 100.0         |                    |

**Questions 7.**
**If you use the library for something specific do you:**

**Do you meet friends**

|       |              | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|--------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | always/often | 9         | 11.4    | 11.4          | 11.4               |
|       | sometimes    | 22        | 27.8    | 27.8          | 39.2               |
|       | rarely/never | 47        | 59.5    | 59.5          | 98.7               |
|       | 9.00         | 1         | 1.3     | 1.3           | 100.0              |
|       | Total        | 79        | 100.0   | 100.0         |                    |

**Children's activities**

|       |              | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|--------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | always/often | 6         | 7.6     | 7.6           | 7.6                |
|       | sometimes    | 6         | 7.6     | 7.6           | 15.2               |
|       | rarely/never | 65        | 82.3    | 82.3          | 97.5               |
|       | 9.00         | 2         | 2.5     | 2.5           | 100.0              |
|       | Total        | 79        | 100.0   | 100.0         |                    |

**obtain info from staff/noticeboards**

|       |              | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-------|--------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid | always/often | 16        | 20.3    | 20.3          | 20.3               |
|       | sometimes    | 29        | 36.7    | 36.7          | 57.0               |
|       | rarely/never | 32        | 40.5    | 40.5          | 97.5               |
|       | 9.00         | 2         | 2.5     | 2.5           | 100.0              |
|       | Total        | 79        | 100.0   | 100.0         |                    |

**A Safe Place to Go**

**study**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | always/often | 12 | 15.2 | 15.2 | 15.2 |
| | sometimes | 14 | 17.7 | 17.7 | 32.9 |
| | rarely/never | 52 | 65.8 | 65.8 | 98.7 |
| | 9.00 | 1 | 1.3 | 1.3 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 79 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**browse through books/magazines**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | always/often | 54 | 68.4 | 68.4 | 68.4 |
| | sometimes | 16 | 20.3 | 20.3 | 88.6 |
| | rarely/never | 7 | 8.9 | 8.9 | 97.5 |
| | 9.00 | 2 | 2.5 | 2.5 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 79 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**borrow books/videos/magazines**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | always/often | 65 | 82.3 | 82.3 | 82.3 |
| | sometimes | 11 | 13.9 | 13.9 | 96.2 |
| | rarely/never | 2 | 2.5 | 2.5 | 98.7 |
| | 9.00 | 1 | 1.3 | 1.3 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 79 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**use the computer**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | always/often | 15 | 19.0 | 19.0 | 19.0 |
| | sometimes | 16 | 20.3 | 20.3 | 39.2 |
| | rarely/never | 45 | 57.0 | 57.0 | 96.2 |
| | 9.00 | 3 | 3.8 | 3.8 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 79 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**sit & relax**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | always/often | 9 | 11.4 | 11.4 | 11.4 |
| | sometimes | 20 | 25.3 | 25.3 | 36.7 |
| | rarely/never | 47 | 59.5 | 59.5 | 96.2 |
| | 9.00 | 3 | 3.8 | 3.8 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 79 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**A Safe Place to Go**

**Question 8.**
**When at the library do you:**

### talk with staff

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | always/often | 17 | 21.5 | 21.5 | 21.5 |
| | sometimes | 37 | 46.8 | 46.8 | 68.4 |
| | rarely/never | 24 | 30.4 | 30.4 | 98.7 |
| | 9.00 | 1 | 1.3 | 1.3 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 79 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

### talk with other users

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | always/often | 10 | 12.7 | 12.7 | 12.7 |
| | sometimes | 30 | 38.0 | 38.0 | 50.6 |
| | rarely/never | 38 | 48.1 | 48.1 | 98.7 |
| | 9.00 | 1 | 1.3 | 1.3 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 79 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

### ask staff for help

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | always/often | 37 | 46.8 | 46.8 | 46.8 |
| | sometimes | 35 | 44.3 | 44.3 | 91.1 |
| | rarely/never | 6 | 7.6 | 7.6 | 98.7 |
| | 9.00 | 1 | 1.3 | 1.3 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 79 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

### stay longer than intended

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | always/often | 36 | 45.6 | 45.6 | 45.6 |
| | sometimes | 27 | 34.2 | 34.2 | 79.7 |
| | rarely/never | 15 | 19.0 | 19.0 | 98.7 |
| | 9.00 | 1 | 1.3 | 1.3 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 79 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**A Safe Place to Go**

**see people you know**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | always/often | 27 | 34.2 | 34.2 | 34.2 |
| | sometimes | 33 | 41.8 | 41.8 | 75.9 |
| | rarely/never | 17 | 21.5 | 21.5 | 97.5 |
| | 9.00 | 2 | 2.5 | 2.5 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 79 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**meet new people**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | always/often | 10 | 12.7 | 12.7 | 12.7 |
| | sometimes | 10 | 12.7 | 12.7 | 25.3 |
| | rarely/never | 58 | 73.4 | 73.4 | 98.7 |
| | 9.00 | 1 | 1.3 | 1.3 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 79 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**Question 9.**
**How important is it that the library is there?**

**How important is the library**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | very | 59 | 74.7 | 74.7 | 74.7 |
| | quite | 5 | 6.3 | 6.3 | 81.0 |
| | 9.00 | 14 | 17.7 | 17.7 | 98.7 |
| | 10.00 | 1 | 1.3 | 1.3 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 79 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**Question 10.**
**Do you agree with the following statements about the library?**

**Important part of local facilities**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | agree strongly | 77 | 97.5 | 97.5 | 97.5 |
| | agree mildly | 1 | 1.3 | 1.3 | 98.7 |
| | 9.00 | 1 | 1.3 | 1.3 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 79 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**A Safe Place to Go**

**mainly for children/students**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | agree strongly | 5 | 6.3 | 6.3 | 6.3 |
| | agree mildlly | 1 | 1.3 | 1.3 | 7.6 |
| | disagree | 73 | 92.4 | 92.4 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 79 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**personally useful**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | agree strongly | 69 | 87.3 | 87.3 | 87.3 |
| | agree mildly | 5 | 6.3 | 6.3 | 93.7 |
| | disagree | 5 | 6.3 | 6.3 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 79 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**a key part of what the Council spends rates on**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | agree strongly | 64 | 81.0 | 81.0 | 81.0 |
| | agree mildly | 9 | 11.4 | 11.4 | 92.4 |
| | disagree | 3 | 3.8 | 3.8 | 96.2 |
| | 9.00 | 3 | 3.8 | 3.8 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 79 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**equity reasons for all**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | agree strongly | 76 | 96.2 | 96.2 | 96.2 |
| | agree mildly | 2 | 2.5 | 2.5 | 98.7 |
| | disagree | 1 | 1.3 | 1.3 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 79 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**good to find local/cultural activity**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | agree strongly | 34 | 43.0 | 43.0 | 43.0 |
| | agree mildly | 35 | 44.3 | 44.3 | 87.3 |
| | disagree | 9 | 11.4 | 11.4 | 98.7 |
| | 9.00 | 1 | 1.3 | 1.3 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 79 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**A Safe Place to Go**

**all can go & find information**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | agree strongly | 70 | 88.6 | 88.6 | 88.6 |
| | agree mildly | 8 | 10.1 | 10.1 | 98.7 |
| | disagree | 1 | 1.3 | 1.3 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 79 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**Question 11.**
**Do you know who runs the library?**

**Do you know who runs the library?**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | staff | 13 | 16.5 | 16.5 | 16.5 |
| | council | 40 | 50.6 | 50.6 | 67.1 |
| | no | 18 | 22.8 | 22.8 | 89.9 |
| | yes | 5 | 6.3 | 6.3 | 96.2 |
| | 9.00 | 3 | 3.8 | 3.8 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 79 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**Question 12.**
**Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about local government:**
*They care and know about the local community*

**Council OK on rubbish type services**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | agree strongly | 31 | 39.2 | 39.2 | 39.2 |
| | agree mildly | 32 | 40.5 | 40.5 | 79.7 |
| | disagree | 2 | 2.5 | 2.5 | 82.3 |
| | 9.00 | 14 | 17.7 | 17.7 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 79 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**Council can't be trusted**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | agree strongly | 4 | 5.1 | 5.1 | 5.1 |
| | agree mildly | 18 | 22.8 | 22.8 | 27.8 |
| | disagree | 42 | 53.2 | 53.2 | 81.0 |
| | 9.00 | 15 | 19.0 | 19.0 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 79 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**A Safe Place to Go**

**Council provide good services & facilitiess**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | agree strongly | 28 | 35.4 | 35.4 | 35.4 |
| | agree mildly | 33 | 41.8 | 41.8 | 77.2 |
| | disagree | 4 | 5.1 | 5.1 | 82.3 |
| | 9.00 | 14 | 17.7 | 17.7 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 79 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**A Safe Place to Go**

## II.II  *Survey of passers by*

**Age**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | 10-14 | 2 | 1.1 | 1.1 | 1.1 |
| | 15-19 | 16 | 8.5 | 8.5 | 9.6 |
| | 20-29 | 49 | 26.1 | 26.1 | 35.6 |
| | 30-44 | 32 | 17.0 | 17.0 | 52.7 |
| | 45-59 | 48 | 25.5 | 25.5 | 78.2 |
| | 60+ | 34 | 18.1 | 18.1 | 96.3 |
| | 9.00 | 6 | 3.2 | 3.2 | 99.5 |
| | 26.00 | 1 | .5 | .5 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 188 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**Sex**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | male | 69 | 36.7 | 36.7 | 36.7 |
| | female | 113 | 60.1 | 60.1 | 96.8 |
| | 9.00 | 6 | 3.2 | 3.2 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 188 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**Education**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | high school | 81 | 43.1 | 43.1 | 43.1 |
| | tafe/trade/other | 45 | 23.9 | 23.9 | 67.0 |
| | university/college | 43 | 22.9 | 22.9 | 89.9 |
| | 9.00 | 16 | 8.5 | 8.5 | 98.4 |
| | 99.00 | 3 | 1.6 | 1.6 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 188 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**Occupation**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | retired | 7 | 3.7 | 3.7 | 3.7 |
| | 2.00 | 26 | 13.8 | 13.8 | 17.6 |
| | 3.00 | 16 | 8.5 | 8.5 | 26.1 |
| | 4.00 | 18 | 9.6 | 9.6 | 35.6 |
| | 5.00 | 39 | 20.7 | 20.7 | 56.4 |
| | 6.00 | 27 | 14.4 | 14.4 | 70.7 |
| | 7.00 | 14 | 7.4 | 7.4 | 78.2 |
| | 8.00 | 30 | 16.0 | 16.0 | 94.1 |
| | 9.00 | 11 | 5.9 | 5.9 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 188 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**Location**
**Not included for identification purposes**

**Question 1.**
**Do you live or work in this area?**

**Live/work in Area**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Yes | 186 | 98.9 | 98.9 | 98.9 |
| | No | 2 | 1.1 | 1.1 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 188 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**Question 2.**
**Do you know where the local library is?**

**Know where library is**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Yes | 178 | 94.7 | 94.7 | 94.7 |
| | No | 9 | 4.8 | 4.8 | 99.5 |
| | 99.00 | 1 | .5 | .5 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 188 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**A Safe Place to Go**

**Question 3.**
**In the last year have you:**

**Read newspapers**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | Daily/weekly | 130 | 69.1 | 69.1 | 69.1 |
| | Often/sometimes | 37 | 19.7 | 19.7 | 88.8 |
| | Rarely/never | 11 | 5.9 | 5.9 | 94.7 |
| | 9.00 | 10 | 5.3 | 5.3 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 188 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**read news/current affairs magazines**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | daily/weekly | 28 | 14.9 | 14.9 | 14.9 |
| | often/sometimes | 64 | 34.0 | 34.0 | 48.9 |
| | rarely/never | 85 | 45.2 | 45.2 | 94.1 |
| | 9.00 | 11 | 5.9 | 5.9 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 188 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**Read books**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | daily/weekly | 82 | 43.6 | 43.6 | 43.6 |
| | often/sometimes | 70 | 37.2 | 37.2 | 80.9 |
| | rarely/never | 26 | 13.8 | 13.8 | 94.7 |
| | 9.00 | 10 | 5.3 | 5.3 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 188 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**Watched/listened news/current affairs**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | daily/weekly | 136 | 72.3 | 72.3 | 72.3 |
| | often/sometimes | 37 | 19.7 | 19.7 | 92.0 |
| | rarely/never | 5 | 2.7 | 2.7 | 94.7 |
| | 9.00 | 10 | 5.3 | 5.3 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 188 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**A Safe Place to Go**

**borrowed books from library**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | daily/weekly | 40 | 21.3 | 21.3 | 21.3 |
| | often/sometimes | 73 | 38.8 | 38.8 | 60.1 |
| | rarely/never | 63 | 33.5 | 33.5 | 93.6 |
| | 9.00 | 12 | 6.4 | 6.4 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 188 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**been to library for event/info**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | daily/weekly | 17 | 9.0 | 9.0 | 9.0 |
| | often/sometimes | 64 | 34.0 | 34.0 | 43.1 |
| | rarely/never | 94 | 50.0 | 50.0 | 93.1 |
| | 9.00 | 13 | 6.9 | 6.9 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 188 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**take child to library**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | daily/weekly | 20 | 10.6 | 10.6 | 10.6 |
| | often/sometimes | 32 | 17.0 | 17.0 | 27.7 |
| | rarely/never | 123 | 65.4 | 65.4 | 93.1 |
| | 9.00 | 13 | 6.9 | 6.9 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 188 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**suggest somebody use library**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | daily/weekly | 21 | 11.2 | 11.2 | 11.2 |
| | often/sometimes | 84 | 44.7 | 44.7 | 55.9 |
| | rarely/never | 70 | 37.2 | 37.2 | 93.1 |
| | 9.00 | 13 | 6.9 | 6.9 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 188 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**thought about using library**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | daily/weekly | 23 | 12.2 | 12.2 | 12.2 |
| | often/sometimes | 99 | 52.7 | 52.7 | 64.9 |
| | rarely/never | 53 | 28.2 | 28.2 | 93.1 |
| | 9.00 | 13 | 6.9 | 6.9 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 188 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

A Safe Place to Go

**noticed happening at library**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | daily/weekly | 20 | 10.6 | 10.6 | 10.6 |
| | often/sometimes | 51 | 27.1 | 27.1 | 37.8 |
| | rarely/never | 100 | 53.2 | 53.2 | 91.0 |
| | 9.00 | 17 | 9.0 | 9.0 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 188 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**planned to go to library**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | daily/weekly | 11 | 5.9 | 5.9 | 5.9 |
| | often/sometimes | 66 | 35.1 | 35.1 | 41.0 |
| | rarely/never | 95 | 50.5 | 50.5 | 91.5 |
| | 9.00 | 16 | 8.5 | 8.5 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 188 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**Question 4.**
**How important is it to have the local library there?**

**Importance of library**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | very | 129 | 68.6 | 68.6 | 68.6 |
| | quite | 31 | 16.5 | 16.5 | 85.1 |
| | 9.00 | 28 | 14.9 | 14.9 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 188 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**Question 5.**
**Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the library :**

**Library is important local facility**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | agree strongly | 154 | 81.9 | 81.9 | 81.9 |
| | agree mildly | 23 | 12.2 | 12.2 | 94.1 |
| | 9.00 | 11 | 5.9 | 5.9 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 188 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**A Safe Place to Go**

**mainly for children**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | agree strongly | 8 | 4.3 | 4.3 | 4.3 |
| | agree mildly | 18 | 9.6 | 9.6 | 13.8 |
| | disagree | 151 | 80.3 | 80.3 | 94.1 |
| | 9.00 | 11 | 5.9 | 5.9 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 188 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**personally useful**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | agree strongly | 112 | 59.6 | 59.6 | 59.6 |
| | agree mildly | 54 | 28.7 | 28.7 | 88.3 |
| | disagree | 10 | 5.3 | 5.3 | 93.6 |
| | 9.00 | 12 | 6.4 | 6.4 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 188 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**key part of council spending**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | agree strongly | 114 | 60.6 | 60.6 | 60.6 |
| | agree mildly | 46 | 24.5 | 24.5 | 85.1 |
| | disagree | 12 | 6.4 | 6.4 | 91.5 |
| | 9.00 | 16 | 8.5 | 8.5 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 188 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**equity for all**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | agree strongly | 157 | 83.5 | 83.5 | 83.5 |
| | agree mildly | 19 | 10.1 | 10.1 | 93.6 |
| | disagree | 1 | .5 | .5 | 94.1 |
| | 9.00 | 11 | 5.9 | 5.9 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 188 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**Find out about local social/cultural activity**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | agree strongly | 84 | 44.7 | 44.7 | 44.7 |
| | agree mildly | 59 | 31.4 | 31.4 | 76.1 |
| | disagree | 33 | 17.6 | 17.6 | 93.6 |
| | 9.00 | 12 | 6.4 | 6.4 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 188 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**A Safe Place to Go**

**all can find information**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | agree strongly | 158 | 84.0 | 84.0 | 84.0 |
| | agree mildly | 19 | 10.1 | 10.1 | 94.1 |
| | disagree | 1 | .5 | .5 | 94.7 |
| | 9.00 | 10 | 5.3 | 5.3 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 188 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**Question 6.**
**Do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the local government:**

**Council cares and knows local community**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | agree strongly | 38 | 20.2 | 20.2 | 20.2 |
| | agree mildly | 106 | 56.4 | 56.4 | 76.6 |
| | disagree | 30 | 16.0 | 16.0 | 92.6 |
| | 9.00 | 14 | 7.4 | 7.4 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 188 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**Council OK on rubbish type services**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | agree strongly | 52 | 27.7 | 27.7 | 27.7 |
| | agree mildly | 105 | 55.9 | 55.9 | 83.5 |
| | disagree | 17 | 9.0 | 9.0 | 92.6 |
| | 9.00 | 14 | 7.4 | 7.4 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 188 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**Council can't be trusted**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | agree strongly | 22 | 11.7 | 11.7 | 11.7 |
| | agree mildly | 54 | 28.7 | 28.7 | 40.4 |
| | disagree | 95 | 50.5 | 50.5 | 91.0 |
| | 9.00 | 17 | 9.0 | 9.0 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 188 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**A Safe Place to Go**

**Council provide good services and facilities**

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Valid | agree strongly | 60 | 31.9 | 31.9 | 31.9 |
| | agree mildly | 103 | 54.8 | 54.8 | 86.7 |
| | disagree | 12 | 6.4 | 6.4 | 93.1 |
| | 9.00 | 13 | 6.9 | 6.9 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 188 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

**A Safe Place to Go**