

# THE LIBRARY DIVIDEND KEY FINDINGS

A study of the socio-economic value of Queensland's public libraries

## 5 KEY REASONS TO CONTINUE INVESTMENT IN QUEENSLAND PUBLIC LIBRARIES

### 1. For every dollar invested in Queensland's public libraries, \$2.30 is the average rate of return in community benefits

Public libraries support 3,135 full-time jobs, contribute \$614 million to Queensland income and add \$295 million to the Queensland Gross State Product.

### 2. Almost half of all Queenslanders are public library users

45% of Queensland householders are members of a public library. In 2010-2011 there were more than 20 million visits to public libraries, lasting on average 30-40 minutes per visit. 85% of library users use the library at least once a month. More than 30,000 library programs were attended by over 630,000 Queenslanders.

### 3. Queensland public libraries are an essential community service

Queensland public libraries contribute to enjoyable and meaningful pastimes, lifelong learning and improving literacy. They provide access to a wide variety of resources including books, DVDs, CDs, e-resources, computers and the internet. Libraries are a safe and welcoming place to meet and encourage socially responsible behaviour.

### 4. Library customers save \$394 per year by using library services

Library customers surveyed estimated that if they had to pay for the services accessed at their library, it would cost them an average of \$394 per year.

### 5. Queenslanders value their public libraries

Over 97% of library users are satisfied or very satisfied with the overall service of their public libraries which includes collections, facilities, computers/Wi-Fi, meeting rooms, building amenity and staff assistance.



## PROTECTING THE INVESTMENT

### Queensland Libraries are assets to local communities and the state — they are a safe investment.

Queensland public libraries provide a return on investment that is equal to, and in some cases better than, other government initiatives.

#### Outstanding value

An investment of \$41.39 per person per annum gives Queenslanders access to free community spaces, information, and learning and leisure services. Libraries connect people to information and each other through computers and wireless hotspots, to friends and family, potential employers, government, banks and other online services. Queensland public libraries provide a safe, welcoming community space — a critical entry point to towns and cities and are a central hub for community activity and services.

Government must invest at an appropriate level in the future to ensure Queensland communities receive equitable access and outstanding value and local economies continue to benefit from library services.

#### For those who need it most

Libraries have long been regarded as essential to the social and economic fabric of Queensland communities, founded on equity of access and providing benefits to both users, value to non-users and flow-on benefits for our state. Library customers include people from disadvantaged backgrounds, often described as 'hard to reach' by other agencies. The vast majority of customers do not have the capacity to pay for the services they receive free of charge at their public library.

#### Impressive statistics

In 2010–11, there were:

- 341 public libraries and Indigenous Knowledge Centres in Queensland (320 public library branches, 20 Indigenous Knowledge Centres)
- 17 mobile libraries servicing 502 communities
- 24 additional service points eg. community centres, stores
- 20.7 million visits by library customers
- 2 million or 45% of Queenslanders were library members
- 40.5 million items were borrowed from public libraries
- public libraries in Queensland occupy 142,000 square metres of floor space
- over 1,700 volunteers support library operations and outreach activities
- over 630,000 participants in library programs
- library meeting rooms are used by the community for 88,000 hours each year
- over 2,300 PC terminals (approx 2,000 with internet access)
- almost 8 million stock items including over 33,000 ebooks.

## MORE INFORMATION

State Library of Queensland commissioned The Library Dividend study to demonstrate the value of public libraries in our state. The research was carried out by SGS Economics and Planning using a rigorous framework and robust research methodology, consistent with existing internationally recognised assessment methods.

The Library Dividend Technical Report, The Library Dividend Summary Report, Key Findings, and FAQs are available from:

[www.plconnect.slq.qld.gov.au/manage/championing](http://www.plconnect.slq.qld.gov.au/manage/championing)

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