

Valuing our libraries

Investing for the future: a national approach to knowledge and information management in the library sector



A report for the Library and Information Association of
New Zealand Aotearoa

September 2014

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A letter from LIANZA

- Like many of its overseas compatriots, our library sector is being challenged by the global financial crisis and the resulting drive for efficiency. Today the issues facing libraries across the country – in schools, communities, tertiary institutions and in the health sector – are ones of how to facilitate literacy and better access to knowledge whilst doing more with less.

The demand for libraries and the services they offer hasn't gone away with the advent of Google. Library users are still placing a high level of importance on the services offered by libraries, including reference librarian services and support for navigating the modern information world. And as a society we're acutely aware of the need for literate, knowledgeable and connected citizens – which is at the core of every library's mission.

The economic value that libraries deliver to first-world economies like New Zealand's isn't in doubt. Hundreds of academic and sectoral research projects across the OECD – some running for many years – have demonstrated that libraries produce solid returns on investment. Depending on the sector and the country, returns of 3:1 to 9:1 are typical – for every dollar invested, between \$3 and \$9 of direct benefit is achieved by society.

- This rate of return creates a compelling case for a strong library sector that is nationally aligned in its aims in order to realise the economic and societal value available. In addition, the government has set ambitious goals for improving national education outcomes and reducing long term welfare dependency .

However there are persistent challenges in communicating this value to both the community and decision makers. In the case of library users, their perceptions about libraries develop early and accompany them on their journey through the education system, their community and the workforce. Libraries tailor services to differing needs, but the core values of all libraries are the same.

In the case of decision makers, libraries haven't been as visible as they need to be. We've seldom articulated a clear vision of how effective libraries contribute to a vibrant knowledge economy, and we haven't clearly spoken with one voice about our challenges and objectives. Much of the rich research available to help central and local government make high quality decisions to invest in library services hasn't been made available to the right people at the right time.

- But a slow revolution is underway.

New Zealand's library sector has been working more closely together to share knowledge, skills and capital investment. Like many other sectors, the internet has enabled greater collaboration and shared procurement has reduced acquisition costs whilst increasing the diversity of lending materials. And the library sector has a strong commitment to the development of a national approach to workforce planning, skills development and recruitment, and in fostering leadership for the new generation of libraries.

Despite the significant improvements of the last decade, many of these changes have been almost invisible to library users – aside from libraries and librarians simplifying the complexity of navigation around the modern jungle of information.

So it's time for the next step. In this report we explain how the sector can work better together by developing a better approach to New Zealand's information and knowledge, and to advocate for a national approach for the library sector. There are some very real challenges in making this happen. However the journey is worth the effort. New Zealand has much to gain from a vibrant library sector that delivers significant economic and social benefits, and which can articulate and lead the evolution of how information and knowledge is generated, synthesised and consumed.

This document is our roadmap for why we need these changes and how we'll get there. Please join us on the journey.

Joanna Matthew
Executive Director, LIANZA
September 2014

“The economic returns generated by libraries are typically from 3:1 to 9:1 – for every dollar invested, between \$3 and \$9 of direct benefit is achieved by society.”

The purpose of this report

- This report was commissioned by the Library and Information Advisory Commission, and developed on behalf of the Library and Information Association of New Zealand Aotearoa by Tregaskis Brown. The report describes the opportunity for New Zealand libraries to work more cooperatively in the management of knowledge and information nationwide, using the international research about the contribution libraries make to society as a starting point. The report:

1. Identifies the impact libraries have on individuals, communities and New Zealand society as a whole;
2. Highlights internal and external challenges facing the library sector; and
3. Describes the potential for extending the current national approach to overcome these challenges and deliver additional value to New Zealanders.

A two stage process was used to construct the report:

- We reviewed the library impact research to establish the extent of the economic and societal impact of libraries. Sources include peer-reviewed academic research and major reports commissioned by library associations world-wide. The impact of public, school, academic, health and specialist libraries were all considered.
- Representatives from the New Zealand library sector were consulted to articulate the drivers for a national approach; to consider what an extended national approach might look like and the benefits of this.

The report comprises three sections:

- **Section One** presents the local and international research that evidences the impact libraries have on their users, on the communities or institutions they serve, and on society as a whole.
- **Section Two** describes the impact of rapid growth in information and communication technologies on libraries, the need for change in response to this and progress made in the New Zealand library sector.
- **Section Three** makes the case for an increased national approach in the New Zealand library sector. It describes the problems currently experienced by the sector; new ways of working to overcome these problems, and the benefits of doing so.

The report concludes with recommendations for how the sector could work more effectively in the future.



The impact of libraries



- In the current economic climate libraries need to 'make their case'

- A huge amount of research on the societal impact of libraries exists

- This research backs libraries as an excellent financial and societal investment

Library impact research

- New Zealand libraries have been working towards a national approach to how the sector operates for some time. For example the strategic priorities for the public library sector, highlighted in Public Libraries Strategic Framework include:

- Development of a national approach to workforce planning, skills development and recruitment, and fostering leadership for the new generation of libraries
- Investigation of opportunities for the development of whole-of-country digital solutions to ensure public library content and services are delivered in the mobile environment

CONZUL (Council of New Zealand University Libraries) also has a shared agenda – their mission is to act collectively to improve access for students and staff of New Zealand universities to the information resources required to advance teaching, learning and research.

However there are additional challenges and opportunities that would benefit from further development of the current national approach:

- New Zealand has a small economy relative to many of the populations represented in the research referred to in this paper, and we can't afford to fragment funding for high cost investments such as leading library sector technology. National collaboration with regard to these investments may make the difference between achieving the aspirations of the sector or not.
- Challenges such as inaccurate perceptions about the value proposition of libraries must be addressed nationally because people journey through the sector as they move through the education system, their community and the workforce. Inevitably their perceptions about libraries develop early and accompany them on this journey with minimal regard for the divisions within it.
- Some form of national collaboration is essential to ensure that capability of the sector and its people is uniform so that no part of the country is left behind as libraries continue to adapt to the changes in society and technology.

Each of the library sub-sectors (public libraries, school and tertiary education libraries, specialist research libraries etc.) face their own subset of these challenges. However the most effective and enduring solutions are likely to be delivered by an approach that allows for these differences, while optimising financial and other efficiencies through effective collaboration.

■ What the research says

In the past two decades there has been a proliferation of research into the benefits libraries bring to society. The library profession has driven much of this research as they have sought to demonstrate and articulate these benefits in a form that policy makers can make use of.

Libraries of all kinds including public, academic, school, health and specialist libraries have conducted research directly, or sponsored it through an academic institution. These studies have typically sought to identify and prove the value of their offerings to individual users and the communities they serve, and some of the research projects have been very wide ranging both in terms of their scope and their extent. A range of methodologies and approaches have been used in studies across different libraries, user groups and geographies.

The primary audience for this research is decision-makers, with the intention that continued investment in libraries will be recognised as adding value in both direct economic benefit and in wider social cohesion.

Work undertaken by LIANZA has demonstrated the degree to which library services are valued in New Zealand. These are articulated in the Libraries Aotearoa Brand Story. The LIANZA research indicates that:

- Conversations with capable library professionals build understanding and encourage intellectual exploration
- Librarians are trusted guides through a “modern jungle of information” – simplifying the complexity of finding the right information

“Most respondents considered that decision makers at all levels of government have little awareness of the contribution which public libraries make to educating Australians, or of the return on investment in them.”

- Libraries are relevant to people's learning experiences at all stages of life. Libraries tailor services to differing needs, but the core values of all libraries are the same
- Libraries support strong knowledge networks by enriching information. Libraries provide "context and completeness, with understanding and relevance"

Our review of the international research has produced findings consistent with this view.

■ Reducing investment in libraries

Governments of most developed nations are being placed under increasing fiscal pressure, particularly in the aftermath of the Global Financial Crisis. Prioritisation of spending on initiatives that align with government strategies and offer the greatest return on investment has resulted in reduced expenditure on some public services, and libraries have not been immune to this trend.

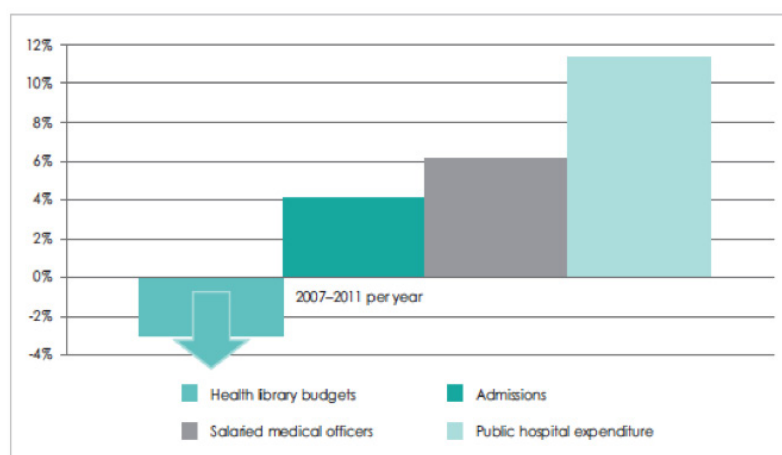
In this climate, libraries are not exempt from the need to make their case. Continued investment depends ultimately on their ability to articulate the value they offer users, communities and society at large, compared with the alternatives that central and local governments are also being asked to fund.

Despite the overwhelming evidence in the research for continued investment, it seems libraries internationally are not receiving the level of investment that reflects their value proposition. It appears that the research is not currently having the desired level of influence on decision-makers; for example:

- An Australian study found that investment in Australian public libraries is currently equivalent to less than 1% of the national expenditure on institutional education and that public libraries are still not well funded for their multidimensional role, or to provide improved support for students.
- Australian school libraries have also generally experienced a reduced commitment to their role, funding and staffing by state and territory education departments, and by individual schools. This is despite the substantial research evidence of a compelling link between well-resourced school libraries and student achievement.

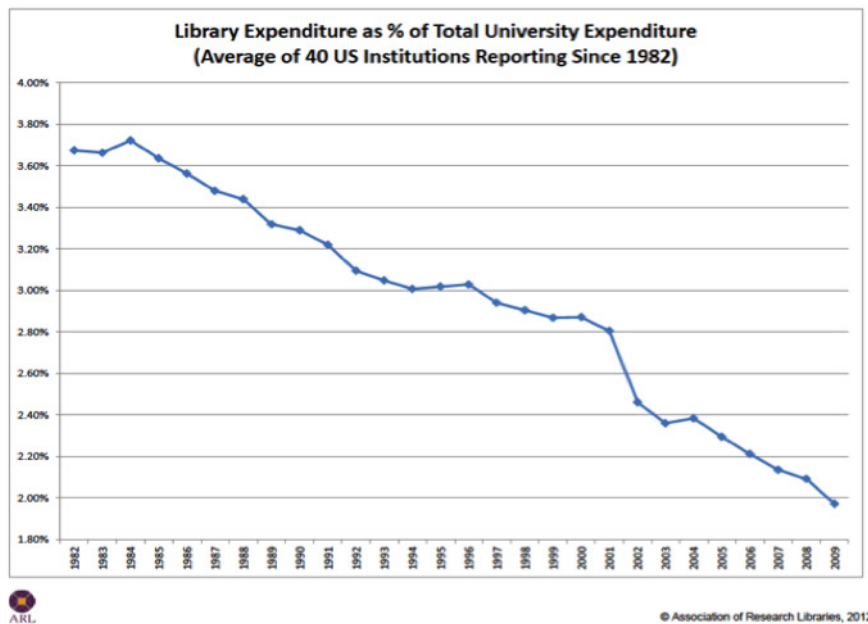
A second study found Australian Health Libraries are also experiencing shrinking budgets, despite increasing hospital admissions and public hospital expenditure:

FIG 1 ACTIVITY GROWTH IN AUSTRALIAN HOSPITALS



Worth every cent and more: An independent assessment of the return on investment of health libraries in Australia. Canberra, ACT: Australian Library and Information Association; 2013.

Another study this time in the United States, finds U.S. Academic Institutions are receiving less and less of total university spend:



Libraries are receiving a shrinking piece of the university pie. United States. American Research Libraries; 2012.

The same trend can also be seen in New Zealand. Expenditure on academic library services by the six largest New Zealand universities has fallen 23% from \$117 million at its peak in 2009, to \$90 million in 2013. And LIANZA statistics show a fairly static level of local government spending on public libraries since 2010, despite huge increases in access to services such as free internet and e-lending.

In parallel with the gradual decline in funding, employment in the sector has also decreased: Census data show there has been a decrease of 3% in those identifying themselves as librarians and a 13.8% decrease in those identifying themselves as library assistants between 2006 and 2013.

■ The library impact research

As noted, there is a wide range of international research into the role and value of libraries stretching back some decades. This section summarises the recent credible international and local research published by peer-reviewed journals and library associations.

Library impact research has traditionally been done in the ways listed below. The research associated with each of these is discussed in this section of the report.

1. Analysing library usage statistics
2. Measuring the ROI of library services and programmes
3. Identifying library outcomes by investigating user and stakeholder perceptions
4. Looking for correlations between libraries and the measurable outcomes to which they contribute.

Based on user and stakeholder perceptions of library value, researchers have created outcome frameworks for different libraries that aim to capture all facets of library impact. Finding ways to quantify the outcomes identified in these frameworks is a fifth emerging line of enquiry.

1: Library usage data

Most libraries collect usage data such as volumes of holdings, opening hours, registered users, visits and issues. These statistics reveal trends in demand for library offerings by giving an indirect indication of the relative value placed on these by communities of users.

Usage statistics are important for library service planning and historically have also been used as proxy measures of library impact. However these proxies are of limited value because there is little demonstrated link between the raw usage data and the impact of library services on individuals and communities. For example, trends in New Zealand public libraries show a decrease

in librarian-assisted issues. This parallels an increase in self-issues and a change in demand for librarian services from high-volume low-value 'transactional' services to lower-volume higher-value interactions between librarians and library users. It would be easy to argue that the benefit delivered by high-value interactions has risen over time, so simply measuring the number of issues per librarian is likely to be an unhelpful data point in assessing a change in value.

2: Economic return on investment

Over the past 20 years library researchers have adopted valuation methods from the field of economics that allow libraries to determine the economic return on investment (EROI) delivered by their programmes and services. A number of these studies have been undertaken for different libraries in a wide range of jurisdictions, using a wide variety of methodologies. Despite the different approaches, the results consistently demonstrate a positive EROI for libraries. Several of these studies from different types of library are summarised below.

EROI for public libraries

A range of studies have demonstrated that the EROI in public libraries has typically been shown to lie in the range 3:1 – 5:1. The following table summarises a range of public library EROI studies from around the world:

| State | Year | Findings | ROI |
|-------------------------|------|---|--------|
| United Kingdom | 2013 | The British Library returns £5 economic value to UK society for every £ invested – to a total of £419 m. per annum. | 5:1 |
| Victoria, Australia | 2011 | Users value Victorian Public Library services at \$681 m. per annum, 3.56 times the annual investment of \$191 m. | 3.56:1 |
| NSW, Australia | 2008 | NSW Public Libraries generate a direct economic benefit of \$4.24 per dollar invested for a total economic benefit of \$1.216 billion. Users value NSW Public Library services at \$392 m. – a 36.2% premium on expenditure. NSW Public Libraries generate \$2.82 of economic activity for each dollar expended directly as operating or capital expenditure. | 4.24:1 |
| United States | 2007 | This research reviewed 17 existing studies (published between 1998 and 2006) on the economic value of Public Libraries in the United States. Among the studies reviewed an economic benefit-cost ratio of 3:1 or better was common. | 3:1 |
| Norway | 2005 | Norwegian Public Libraries return economic value 4 times the level of investment. | 4:1 |
| Wellington, New Zealand | 2002 | Every dollar expended in providing the National Library of New Zealand's National Bibliographic Database and National Union Catalogue creates \$3.50 of value for users – \$160 m. per annum. | 3.5:1 |

EROI for academic libraries

Similar results are evident in studies of the EROI of academic libraries. A study conducted in the United States in 2011 found the Economic ROI of electronic access to academic journal articles through academic libraries is between 1:1 and 15.5:1. Return on Investment was found to depend heavily on the institution. The study used grant funding as a measure of return and therefore scientific research institutes with a high focus on external funding had the highest ROIs – falling in the range 13.2:1 to 15.5:1.

Other studies calculate the EROI in academic libraries by alternative methods, including analysis of the avoided time and cost to researchers of having access to electronic journals through the library. Results fall in the range 2.9:1 to 5.4:1.

EROI for other libraries

A recent Australian study found that health libraries in Australia have an EROI of 9:1. This was believed to be a conservative estimate and the true value of health libraries is likely to be even higher.

No economic ROI studies on school libraries could be found in the research. There is however an enormous body of quantitative and qualitative research proving the extensive impact of school library services on children's reading literacy, academic achievement and personal development.

Specialist libraries fulfill niche information needs for a variety of different institutions including specialist schools, research institutes, government agencies, not-for-profit organisations and corporations. The information requirements of these institutions vary widely, so the impact of

the specialist library is likely to be highly context-sensitive, which means less research has been conducted.

The Economic ROI of a specialist library in a public policy and management school in South Korea was found to be 1.97:1. This analysis was based on a range of resources and services offered by the library under investigation.

3: Library outcome research

Given the range of direct and indirect benefits that accrue from library services across their varied user communities, simple usage statistics and EROI arguments often fall short. As one study stated,

“A book having been borrowed does not equal a book having been read or consulted. One would want to know what reading a book has contributed to a person’s world view or knowledge.”

This particular study went on to explain the importance of outcomes in library impact research. Outcomes take the importance of the library for individuals and society one step further because they:

- reflect the changes or improvements brought about in people’s lives
- measure the impact or benefit, not output or productivity
- are usually reported in improvement in skills, knowledge, attitude, behaviour or condition e.g. life situation or social status

While this is an evolving area of research, it does show a great deal of promise in providing a robust way of assessing value, and some significant studies have already demonstrated the effectiveness of these measures.

We reviewed several library impact studies investigating the outcomes of public, school, academic, health and specialist libraries.

■ Public library outcomes

Our review of the international studies of the societal outcomes fostered by public libraries found overwhelming evidence of positive impact on a wide variety of outcomes. Two quotes capture the general conclusions of this research:

“Public libraries are the umbrella institution of the learning society”.

“Libraries and schools are on a par with each other in terms of what we are trying to accomplish – which is to better educate society. But the library scope extends even further than that of schools...A library is an innovator and should play an integral and active role in that effort in every community.”

One study published by the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) has formulated an initial framework for public library outcomes.

The study reviewed a number of major international surveys of user and stakeholder perceptions of the societal impact of libraries on individuals and communities. The authors subsequently triangulated the results of the review through extensive stakeholder consultation with public library users and stakeholders in the Netherlands.

Five domains of societal impact were found to exist: economic, educational, social, cultural and affective. Please see Appendix Three for the Framework including all outcome dimensions.

A few of the ways public libraries achieve individual and community outcomes have been considered in various studies to include:

- public libraries strengthen communities
- internet access in public libraries gets people on-line and reduces the digital divide
- public libraries are important community meeting places that expose individuals to the complexity of digital and multicultural society
- public libraries support primary school-aged children’s literacy achievement and reduce the reading gap
- public libraries support student educational achievement

Each of these is described further in Appendix One.

■ School library outcomes

Librarians have long studied the impact of school libraries on a variety of outcomes. As is the case with public libraries, the impact of school libraries is undeniable; the evidence base enormous.

A quote from the Chairman of the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science on the impact of school libraries in the United States:

“When school librarians collaborate with classroom teachers to enrich curriculum content, they help create more authentic learning experiences... School library collections inform, educate, entertain, and enrich students at all levels.... When students are able to explore information that is meaningful to them, they not only learn faster but their literacy skills grow rapidly; they learn how to learn .”

Unlike the broad focus of public library impact research, school library research focuses primarily on outcomes for students. A major report by Scholastic Library Publishing in the United States entitled *School Libraries Work* summarises the impact of school libraries into four key areas:

- school libraries are critical to student achievement
- school libraries have an important role in teaching
- school libraries are leading the way for technology use in schools
- school libraries are critical to literacy development

Other studies have found school libraries have an important role in student personal development, helping students develop self-esteem, confidence, independence and a sense of responsibility for their own learning.

■ Health library outcomes

The research shows that health libraries provide significant support to both clinicians and health researchers in their work.

A few quotes from a recent study of healthcare practitioner and researcher perceptions of hospital library impact in Australia reflect the general perception:

“I have found library staff and resources invaluable in helping me to provide evidence based practice”

- Clinical Psychologist

“I need to collaborate with library staff to be effective. I think any reduction in health library services would result in poorer quality clinical research and ultimately clinical care.”

- Research Fellow

One of the first attempts to demonstrate the impact of the hospital health library was published in 1992. The study, known throughout the industry as ‘The Rochester Study,’ was undertaken by health librarians in response to a 1986 U.S. federal regulation that eliminated the requirement that hospitals maintain a library. The study investigated clinician perceptions of the value of information provided through health library services. The study demonstrated that health library information:

- changed the way clinicians approached certain aspects of patient care
- contributed to the avoidance of adverse patient events

The physicians consulted rated the information provided by the library more highly than that provided by other information sources including diagnostic imaging, lab tests and discussion with colleagues.

Since 1992, similar studies have been conducted in a number of locations internationally. Findings consistently reflect those of the Rochester study.

All of the outcomes described above ultimately have a positive impact on patient health outcomes. Other studies have established links between improved patient care, as well as efficiencies in the use of clinician time and hospital resources, as a result of health library information.

■ Academic library outcomes

A major international review of academic library impact research conducted by the Association of College and Academic Libraries provides the best overview of the impact of academic libraries. This review identified a range of outcomes for university students, faculty and the academic institution to which the library belongs, and the authors classified these outcomes into the framework included in Appendix Three. The impacts included range from impacts on student enrolment, and retention through to student learning, achievement and employment success. The review also identifies academic library impact on diverse dimensions such as faculty grants, faculty research productivity and institutional reputation and prestige.

The findings of this review are supported by the many academic library impact studies which focus on access to e-journals, one of the most valuable sources of material offered by the academic library. A typical quote from one of these studies:

“Access [to electronic journals] has made collecting research resources infinitely more efficient, and facilitated interdisciplinary research.”

■ Specialist library outcomes

Specialist libraries operate in a wide range of contexts therefore the outcomes ascribed to them vary. The library and information services of Science and Industrial Research Institutes have been shown to have positive impact on the research process including :

- time saved in information retrieval and delivery, and
- higher success rates in research

A range of other impacts have been found in earlier research including:

- changes in attitude and behaviour
- peer recognition and acceptance
- enlargement of the scope of the resources used
- better knowledge of how to seek information
- improvements in skills and competencies
- improved confidence

The information provided by special libraries serving fire service personnel and researchers helps them avoid a wide range of negative outcomes directly relevant to the efficiency and standard of services they provide.

Corporate library and information services have been shown to be capable of supporting almost any aspect of business performance in a variety of ways .

■ Research summary

Irrespective of the research methodology chosen, where the research was undertaken or the size of the community investigated, it's apparent that libraries are providing high value services that produce an excellent EROI and deliver tangible benefits for users, in a way that is consistent across the OECD.

And the benefits from library services are significant. Compared to some traditional central government infrastructure projects that can struggle to break even, libraries represent very good value for money with a high rate of return. On simple economics alone, a dollar spent on the library sector represents a prudent investment in the knowledge-driven economy; when viewed through the lens of wider societal benefits, the argument for investing in library services becomes compelling.

Our review of the research suggests overwhelming evidence for the critical contribution the library sector makes to individual and societal prosperity. In addition, exponential technological improvement in the way information is disseminated and shared presents both a compelling opportunity and a considerable challenge to the sector. The rapid developments in technology enable more comprehensive, efficient and accessible library content and services, while at the same time requiring a level of agility in the sector that is unprecedented.

In addition, the environment libraries are operating in continues to be challenged by pressure on the public purse, as well as the significant structural changes in the way information is accessed and shared. These challenges are not likely to ease in the years ahead, so libraries will need to adapt to a fluid environment. A key element in doing so will be to continue to demonstrate that libraries are an investment rather than an expense, and in convincing decision makers that the sector is an essential component of an information-driven economy.

“On simple economics alone, a dollar spent on the library sector represents a prudent investment in the knowledge-driven economy; when viewed through the lens of wider societal benefits, the argument for investing in library services becomes compelling.”



The future of libraries in New Zealand



Library

- Libraries are in a period of transition as society and technology evolve
- Libraries are a very significant business in the New Zealand economy
- Collaboration is already happening across the sector

Libraries in a changing world

- The fundamental principles and core role of public libraries has evolved over time; the physical library of 2014 would be recognisable to any literate citizen from the last millennia. What is changing rapidly is how libraries deliver their services in order to meet the needs of their communities.

Libraries are in a period of transition and will be for some time; they need to continue collecting, cataloguing and disseminating physical materials, but they are also breaking new ground in offering digital content.

The New Zealand Public Library Strategic Framework (2012-2017) has identified a number of challenges facing the New Zealand public library sector as a result of the move to an increasingly digital world:

- changing customer expectations of service and a perception that libraries are no longer needed with the rise of the internet
- structural barriers to information access imposed by copyright restrictions that are increasingly international and the subject of changing societal and legal expectations
- insufficient awareness of the extent to which public libraries contribute to positive learning outcomes
- lack of e-book content available to New Zealand, with licensing, business model and platform issues that need to be addressed against a background of rising demand for digital content
- increasing demand for collections to be broadened in scope to meet the needs of all groups, such as the visually impaired and those requiring literacy development
- New Zealand has a growing mix of ethnicities that require content in languages other than English and Māori
- insufficient resources to digitise existing library content at the rate expected by the public
- rapid change in technologies is making it difficult for libraries to remain abreast of new developments, and libraries lack some of the required IT expertise and support to ensure emerging technology platforms can be deployed and managed
- need for significant on-going investment in technology and infrastructure at a time where funding pressures exist and traditional local government funding sources are under pressure
- the relatively high cost of mobile services is creating barriers to new ways of working
- the current business and funding models make it difficult to deliver shared services across libraries, resulting in sectoral inefficiencies
- pressure on libraries to adopt business models that charge users for services
- a growing need for librarians with different sets of skills to provide services in a rapidly changing demographic and digital environment

These intertwined challenges are unique in the history of libraries.

However the sector is highly adaptive – as shown by the fact that libraries have survived the fall of empires, global wars and fundamental changes in both technology and society over centuries – so there is every reason to expect that communities will continue to value the services provided by the sector.

The current pace of change in the library and information sector is dramatic, as new technologies continue to reinvent modes of communication and methods of information storage and transmission. However, this is nothing new for the sector, and libraries continue to rise to the challenge and meet it head-on. Despite the changing forms in which information is presented and in part due to the increasing amount of information at our fingertips, the role of libraries and librarians in facilitating access to information is becoming more important. Librarians provide a vital service to New Zealand communities as they simplify the complexity of the modern information world.

Libraries are big business – the industry is supported by 6,198 staff with over \$400 m. spent across the sector in 2013. In 2012/13 local government spent \$271 m. on public libraries alone.

Libraries are also having a significant impact on the digital divide, in terms of both access and addressing digital literacy. Internet access is currently provided in all New Zealand public libraries.

and a significant number also offer wireless access for those who bring their own devices. Librarians in the public system are often supporting social services through the provision of training services to individuals re-entering the work force, assisting individuals in accessing e-government services, and running community programmes that support local government initiatives. Summer reading programmes maintain literacy for children and support the work of our education system.

Many public libraries also offer e-book lending, and a range of databases allowing patrons to access information without entering a physical facility.

University libraries also allow individuals to access and use material without setting foot in a building, and library staff now troubleshoot access to material for students across a range of platforms and devices as do the majority of health, government, and special libraries.

Libraries have been a significant force in compelling publishers to allow e-lending, and in negotiating contracts that ensure the price of quality information remains affordable to all individuals.

Libraries are already collaborating – and are seeking ways to collaborate more fully. Consortia sharing purchasing for everything from paper books to library management systems are in operation and involve libraries from every sector. Associations working in the sector, including LIANZA and APLM are supporting these efforts at the behest of their members, driving the provision of industry standards, and supporting libraries to collaborate to meet the needs of their communities more fully.

However, while these efforts are informal and primarily operating at the sector level, the community impact is necessarily limited. Formal, top-down, initiatives driven by government policy will enhance the benefits already being delivered.

As noted earlier, government itself has ambitious goals in the areas of better education and employment outcomes for young people and long term welfare recipients. Goals to be achieved by 2017 include:

- increase the proportion of 18-year-olds with NCEA level 2 or equivalent qualification
- increase the proportion of 25 to 34-year-olds with advanced trade qualifications, diplomas and degrees (at level 4 or above).
- reduce the number of people who have been on a working age benefit for more than 12 months

The international research indicates that libraries will play a key role in achieving these goals. A comprehensive national approach in the sector and the right leadership from central government are essential to address the challenges outlined above and fully support achievement of the government's goals.



“Libraries have survived the fall of empires, global wars and fundamental changes in both technology and society over centuries – so there is every reason to expect that communities will continue to value the services they provide.”

The need for a national approach



- The value of libraries is not widely recognised
- There are significant benefits in taking a national approach to the sector
- Achieving these benefits is feasible and practical

Rationale for a national approach

- Our review of the research suggests overwhelming evidence for the critical contribution the library sector makes to individual and societal prosperity. In addition, exponential technological improvement presents both a compelling opportunity - and a considerable challenge to the sector. Technology increasingly enables more comprehensive, efficient and accessible library content and services while at the same time driving investment options and a need for agility in the sector which is unprecedented.

While the library sector in New Zealand collectively represents a substantial investment in terms of funding and expertise, at the same time the sector is facing some major challenges that will not be overcome without a considered and sustained national approach. The most significant challenges currently facing the library sector nationally are:

- the modern value proposition for libraries is not recognised by the sector's key constituents – citizens, policy makers, decision makers and too frequently, people employed in the sector
- people hold an outmoded view that libraries exist to provide access to content, printed content in particular. In this narrow view of the sector, the advent of the internet will gradually make libraries obsolete
- New Zealanders currently experience significant inequity of access to content and services due to variable levels of investment and variable adoption of technologies which might improve access
- the library sector is fragmented and siloed with regard to setting and delivering on strategy and this results in inefficient investment and wasted opportunities. While different libraries serve very different needs and are funded in markedly different ways, compelling common ground exists which should compel greater collaboration
- capability within the sector lags behind the opportunities offered by the technology available and the sector is often not able to optimise these opportunities.

It is believed that many of these challenges could be overcome and that significant benefits for New Zealand could be achieved within current funding constraints if the right level of collaboration is employed in the sector. This is likely to entail some loss of autonomy of decision making; however the benefits are thought to be considerable for the sector as a whole.

■ The value of a national approach

A national approach to addressing these challenges is considered essential for several reasons:

- while each of the library sub - sectors (public libraries, school and tertiary education libraries, specialist research libraries etc.) face their own subset of these challenges and need to be flexible in order to meet specific community needs, the most effective and enduring solutions are likely to be delivered by an approach that allows for these differences while optimising financial and other efficiencies through significant collaboration.
- New Zealand has a small economy relative to many of the populations represented in the research referred to in this paper and we can't afford to fragment sources of funds for high cost investments such as leading library sector technology. National collaboration with regard to these investments may make the difference between achieving our aspirations for the sector or not.
- challenges such as inaccurate perceptions about the value proposition of libraries must be addressed nationally because people journey through the sector as they move through the education system, their community and the workforce. Inevitably their perceptions about libraries develop early and accompany them on this journey with minimal regard for the divisions within it.
- finally, some form of national collaboration is essential because the capability of the sector and its people has to be raised and all parties will need to participate so that no part of the sector is left behind.

■ The current state

A national approach has already been adopted to a significant extent by key institutions in the sector. The Public Libraries Strategic Framework developed by the Association of Public Library Managers outlines strategic priorities for the public library sector and these include:

- Development of a national approach to workforce planning, skills development and recruitment, and foster leadership for the new generation of libraries
- Investigation of opportunities for the development of whole-of-country digital solutions to ensure public library content and services are delivered in the mobile environment.

LIANZA itself has national responsibilities and has led a number of national initiatives amongst its members and the wider public. The establishment of Brand Libraries Aotearoa has provided a marketing plan to drive consistent messaging across the sector.

Other important instances of collaboration include public and school libraries working together through the National Library services to schools programme, the Upper Hutt “book in every backpack” programme and purchasing consortia in several areas of the sector.

- Council of NZ University Libraries
- Kotui
- Interloan
- APNK
- Purchasing Consortia
- Smart Consortium
- Public and school libraries working together
- National library services to schools programme
- Upper Hutt Book in every backpack programme
- Academic research portals

■ Components of a national approach

Building on the work already undertaken, a national approach to the library sector needs to encompass those components which in combination enable the sector to overcome the challenges described earlier. These components include:

- A vision for the sector and the strategy designed to deliver on that vision
- The principles that underpin service delivery, investment and change priorities
- How funds are sourced and investment is used to deliver on strategy
- Communication and engagement to improve appreciation of the sector
- Monitoring and reporting on progress towards the vision
- Setting standards and developing capability
- Responding to new challenges that emerge along the way
- Planning and coordinating enactment of the strategy

As noted earlier, any national approach needs to accommodate the differing needs of the sub sectors while making the most of the benefits to be gained from a collaborative approach.

A national approach also needs to be achievable within the current legislative framework so that work on establishing it can begin immediately and control of the agreed approach is entirely in the hands of the people in the sector. A proposed national approach is set out below.

| Component | Proposed approach |
|---|---|
| A vision for the sector and the strategy designed to deliver on that vision | Nationally developed vision and strategy, each sub sector responsible for determining how to give effect to these in that sector. |
| The principles that underpin service delivery, investment and change priorities | Nationally developed principles, each sub sector responsible for determining how to give effect to these in that sector. |
| How funds are sourced and investment is used to deliver on strategy | A national, collaborative approach to selecting projects for national investment and funding these out of combined sources. Investment opportunities that don't warrant national collaboration are considered within each subsector or library as appropriate. It may also be possible to create a source of funds to be managed nationally but distributed for investment in smaller "qualifying" projects that may not be funded otherwise. |
| Communication and engagement to improve appreciation of the sector | Designed and undertaken nationally with obvious sub sector responsibilities devolved to them. |
| Monitoring and reporting on progress towards the vision | National coordination of monitoring and reporting on progress with regard to all aspects of the national vision and strategy including national scale investments. |
| Setting standards of service | Set nationally agreed minimum service levels for local enactment that allow for innovation. |
| Developing people capability | Set national standards of qualification and capability for local enactment. Encourage cross sector professional development and career paths. Could ultimately develop a national capability improvement strategy. |
| Responding to new challenges that emerge along the way | Collated nationally and managed through the national reporting process to ensure that responding to emerging challenges is coordinated. Acted on nationally or by sub sector as appropriate. |
| Planning and coordinating enactment of the strategy | Enactment of the strategy occurs within each sub sector with assistance from a central source as required. |

Enabling a national approach

Designing, implementing and sustaining the national approach will benefit from some central coordination and support for sub sectors as appropriate. The National Library may be in the best position to fulfil this role given its sector-wide perspective.

The National Library also offers the advantage of its position within the wider knowledge and information management sector which encompasses related entities such as Archives NZ.

While adopting a national approach of the scale proposed will have a significant impact on libraries in the sector and require a substantial change in approach to some key decisions, the benefits for all involved are considerable.

The primary benefit of such an approach will be to provide a sound base for overcoming the major challenges the sector is currently facing. In addition successfully adopting such an approach is likely to:

- develop a reputation for successful delivery of strategy through collaboration and pooling expertise and funding to the advantage of all in the sector
- strengthen the lobbying of decision makers by providing a more united voice for the sector
- provide "one voice" for raising awareness of the contribution made by the sector
- generate efficiencies through pooling resources to achieve shared improvements particularly in capital intensive areas such as technology and collection management
- improve the national collection and national standards of service through pooling resources
- provide incentives for people in the profession to embrace new ways of working and professional development opportunities
- increased job satisfaction for people motivated by innovation and high standards of service
- improve equity of access through agreed minimum service standards and greater collaboration in collection management to reach potentially isolated people
- deliver better value public services

Achieving these benefits for the sector will benefit the communities it serves. Individuals and communities will have better access to a wider range of library information and services. Differences in access will also be helped by sector investment in national access systems.

The benefits of collaboration to the community are evident in the amalgamation of the Auckland public libraries. The amalgamation is thought to have resulted in efficiencies and service improvement for Aucklanders using its services.

However it is acknowledged that progressing all of the components of a national approach presents some significant external and internal challenges for the library sector. These include:

- key stakeholders don't appreciate the significant value of the library sector and their full support for the sector needs to be won
- legislative change may be required to enable some aspects of a national approach, this is unlikely to be a priority for the government
- the Department of Internal Affairs may be reluctant to agree to the lead role for the National Library proposed in this report

The sector has a successful track record of collaboration to date. However a much great degree of consensus is required to achieve and maintain the model of collaboration described in this report. The challenges from within the sector include:

- key decision makers may resist financial collaboration
- library managers may be resistant to relinquishing control over aspects of their business
- stakeholders may be concerned that national collaboration may put diversity and specialisation at risk
- significant national collaboration will be required to establish and maintain fair and transparent funding arrangements

Conclusions and recommendations



Investing in the future

- The international evidence confirms that the library sector makes an essential contribution to the economy and future prosperity. This conclusion is important to New Zealanders right now and for the future. In addition, the government has set ambitious goals for improving national education outcomes, reducing long term welfare dependency and generating a major lift to GDP through better education over the next 15 years. These goals will not be achieved without a strong and future focused library sector to support high quality learning for young people during their education and for job seekers in the wider community.

The strategic and operational collaboration already in place suggests that key individuals in the sector and bodies such as LIANZA are strongly motivated to jointly address the challenges the sector faces and support the government in achieving their wider goals.

Clearly a lot can be achieved through the leadership of key influencers. However our research and the input we've sought from the sector suggest that this on its own is not enough. Leadership is needed at several levels to achieve a strong, nationally aligned and future focused library sector that can deliver the economic and societal returns outlined in the research:

- Librarians and library managers need to acknowledge the compelling case for a national approach and become active in the national alignment required
- Decision makers responsible for libraries in local government, the public sector (including education) and the private sector also need to embrace a national approach and support the changes that this may require within and between their libraries
- Strong central government support is needed so that the policy settings support the important role that libraries play within communities

With these three levels of leadership in mind we recommend that readers note that:

- The current level of investment in the library sector is substantial and taken as a whole, this investment can be harnessed to further increase the value offered by the sector
- In order to fully realise the value the sector can add and to overcome the significant challenges it faces, a national approach to determining and delivering on strategy is required
- This national approach (outlined in Section 7 of this report) should include:
 - development of a vision and strategy for the sector, including communication
 - development of a set of principles to underpin service delivery, investment and change priorities
 - national funding collaboration which may include pooling of funds for major capital investments in areas such as technology and collections management
 - consideration given to establishing some national sources of funds tailored to address specific opportunities
 - development of national service delivery standards
 - development of national people capability framework encompassing standards, qualifications and career paths
 - monitoring and reporting on progress against the strategy
 - sub sector implementation of the national strategy coordinated and supported by a central resource as required

Appendices



- Appendix 1: How public libraries achieve their outcomes
- Appendix 2: Workshop participants
- Appendix 3: Library outcome frameworks
- Appendix 4: Bibliography

Appendix 1

■ How public libraries achieve their outcomes

■ Public libraries strengthen communities

| | |
|-----------|---|
| Study | An extensive research project with the intent of showing how the public libraries of Victoria can help achieve state government policy goals through community strengthening. |
| Findings | <p>The findings showed that libraries and librarians make a fundamental contribution to the communities they serve in four key areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overcoming the digital divide • Creating informed communities • Providing convenient and comfortable places of learning • Building social capital <p>More specifically libraries are perceived to add value to communities in the fields of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabling social interaction • Promoting social inclusion • Bridging the generation gap • Providing a focal point for the community <p>Findings show that on the individual level, the library contributes by:</p> <p>Providing access to information through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stimulating and supporting information discovery • Providing access to multilingual services • Helping culturally and linguistically diverse communities • Mediating between the user and the information available • Maintaining local history and culture <p>And helping individuals to develop their skills by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting learning in infancy and childhood • Supporting young people/students • Supporting basic literacy and encouraging reading • Providing access to new technology and skills • Stimulating thinking |
| Data | Interviews, surveys and focus groups were conducted with almost 10,000 people from key stakeholder groups. |
| Reference | Libraries Building Communities: The Vital Contribution of Victoria's Public Libraries. Library Board of Victoria and the Victorian Public Library Network; 2005. |

■ Internet access at public libraries reduces the digital divide

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|-----------|--|
| Study | A research initiative examining the impact of free access to computers and the Internet in public libraries across the United States. 2010. |
| Findings | <p>Internet access is now one of the most sought-after public library services - it is used by nearly half of all visitors.</p> <p>People use library computers to perform both life-changing and routine tasks including finding work, applying for college, securing government benefits, and learning about critical medical treatments.</p> <p>The variety of fields where library influence was perceived was reduced to seven categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social connection (maintain personal connections); • Education (e.g. use library computers to do schoolwork and taking online classes); • Employment (e.g. search for job opportunities; submit an application online or work on a resume); • Health and wellness (learning about medical conditions, finding health care providers, and assessing health insurance options); • E-government (e.g. learn about laws and regulations, find out about a government program or service); • Community and civic engagement (e.g. learn about politics, news, and the community, keeping up with current events); • Personal finance (e.g. manage personal finances, online banking and making purchases online). <p>Although many different types of residents use public library computer and Internet services, libraries appear to be particularly effective in addressing the needs of families who still lack access in their homes or elsewhere. When they do have an Internet connection at home, they use the library, because: they wanted technical help from a librarian, they competed with each other for access to the computer at home, or simply wanted to work somewhere more peaceful and inviting than a crowded coffee shop or a hectic unemployment office.</p> |
| Data | Findings are based on a survey of nearly 50,000 patrons of over 400 public libraries, as well as hundreds of interviews with users, non-users, staff, administrators, funding agencies and other community agencies across the U.S |
| Reference | Becker S, Crandall M, Fisher K, Kinney B, Landry C, Rocha A. Opportunity for All: How the American Public Benefits from Internet Access at U.S. Libraries. Washington, D.C.: Institute of Museum and Library Services; 2010. |

Public libraries are important community meeting places

| | |
|-----------|---|
| Study | A research initiative exploring in depth the role of the public library in generating social capital in Norway. 2010. |
| Findings | <p>The public library is a unique and complex meeting place. The public library functions as a meeting place in the following ways:</p> <p>As a public space and a low threshold social meeting place, a place for accidental meetings and conversations and for making appointments to do something else</p> <p>As a meeting place between meeting places, an arena where you can find information about and be directed to other meeting places in the community</p> <p>As a public sphere in its own right where political and cultural ideas are presented and discussed</p> <p>As an arena where you can acquire the information and knowledge you need to be an active, involved and participating citizen</p> <p>As an arena where you live out professional or private involvements together with colleagues and friends i.e. undertake joint activities</p> <p>An arena for virtual meetings on the web</p> <p>The library is heavily used as a meeting place and the type of meeting with the highest score is that of encounters with people belonging to a different culture, where one has observed and experienced things about these cultures. The library thus appears to be a place where, in a safe environment and in an unobtrusive way, people are exposed to the complexity of the digital and multicultural society and learn something about multiculturalism.</p> <p>Correlations between low income and low education and high use of the library as a meeting place were found, indicating that the library as a meeting place plays a substantial role in equalising the possibilities of being an active citizen across social and economic differences.</p> |
| Data | <p>Findings are based on the results of two quantitative surveys carried out in three Norwegian communities.</p> <p>Multivariate regression analyses were performed to analyse why some people use the library for a range of meetings and others do not, as well as to examine variations in the use of the library for different kinds of meetings.</p> |
| Reference | Aabo S, Audnunsen R, Varheim A. How do libraries function as meeting places? Library and Information Science Research. 2010; 32:16–26. |

Public libraries support primary school children's literacy and reduce the reading gap

| | |
|-----------|---|
| Study | A review of existing research on the "summer-slide" in primary school-aged children's literacy achievement, and the ability of public library summer-reading programmes to counter this. |
| Findings | <p>Summer learning loss or the 'summer-slide' is a well-defined phenomenon in school-aged children.</p> <p>It has been estimated that the summer break from regular schooling causes the average student to lose approximately one month of tuition, with disadvantaged students being disproportionately affected.</p> <p>Researchers have concluded that up to two-thirds of the 9th grade reading achievement gap can be explained by unequal access to summer learning opportunities during elementary school years.</p> <p>Current research points out that increased summer reading reduces summer learning loss.</p> <p>Public library summer reading programs are one solution to the "summer slide."</p> <p>The findings of recent research suggest that summer reading interventions may be particularly effective for low-income children.</p> <p>Other research has found that children can benefit from "hybrid" programs which combine elements of youth development principles with academic enrichment. Summer reading programs in libraries exemplify this kind of hybrid program.</p> <p>Researchers have found that, in addition to literacy related activities, children in library programs benefited academically from story hours, arts and crafts, and other special events designed to enhance the reading experience.</p> |
| Data | A range of primary and meta-analytical studies conducted over the last three decades. |
| Reference | Balsen, K. The importance of summer reading: Public library summer reading programs and learning. New York State Library; 2011. |

| | |
|-----------|---|
| Study | A research initiative investigating the impact of Australia's public libraries on student educational achievement. |
| Findings | <p>The survey found that Australia's public libraries receive high use from primary and secondary school students in particular, including home schooled children.</p> <p>For the majority of Australia's public library services student use was found to be increasing.</p> <p>Many public libraries in Australia provide a wide range of services and resources to support students including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional reference assistance • Internet access • Online homework tutoring • Special collections • Study spaces, and • Homework centres and clubs. <p>About 9% of Australian public libraries are also now joint use libraries in partnership with formal educational provider's – primarily high schools but also universities.</p> |
| Data | Findings are based on responses to a survey sent to all Australian public library services – a total of 534 services with 1560 branches. |
| | The questions focused on identifying the policy commitment of local government authorities and libraries to supporting local learners, the extent to which local public libraries are used by students, the services and facilities available to them, and the barriers to improved support. |
| Reference | Blundy A. Supporting students: The educational contribution of Australia's public libraries. Melbourne, Australia: Friends of Libraries of Australia; 2006. |

Appendix 2

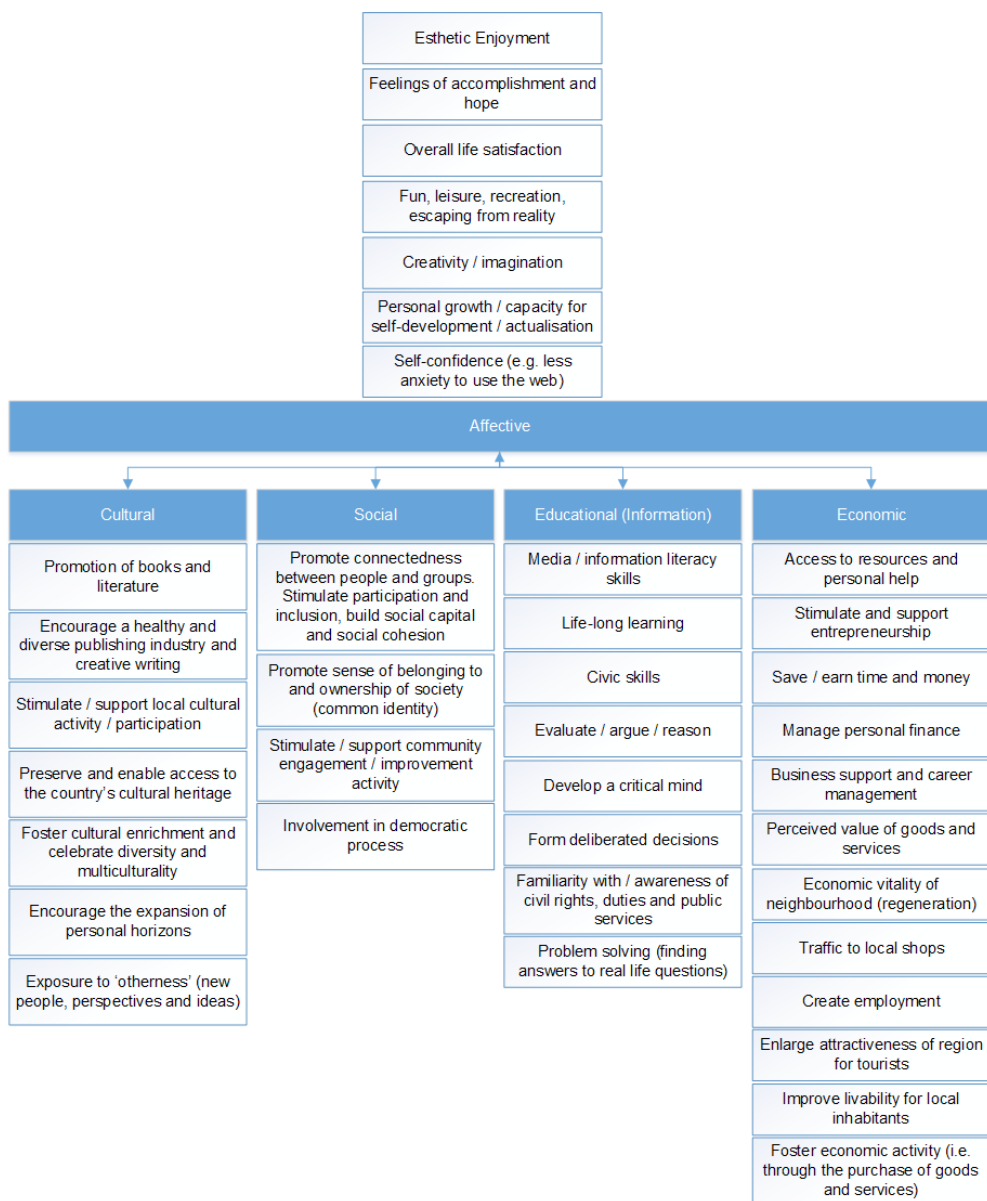
■ Workshop participants

| Name | Organisation |
|--------------------|--|
| Joanna Matthew | Library and Information Association of New Zealand Aotearoa (LIANZA) |
| Kris Wehipeihana | New Zealand National Dance and Drama Centre, LIANZA |
| Debbie Duncan | Upper Hutt City Council, Association of Public Library Managers |
| Te Paea Paringatai | Kapiti Coast District Council |
| Corin Haines | National Library of New Zealand, LIANZA |
| Lewis Brown | National Library of New Zealand |
| Bill MacNaught | National Library of New Zealand |
| Hillary Rendell | Ministry of Education |

Appendix 3

Library outcome frameworks

Public libraries



Adapted from: Huysmans F, Oomes M. Measuring the public library's societal value: A methodological research program. *International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions Journal*. 2013; 39 (2):168–77.

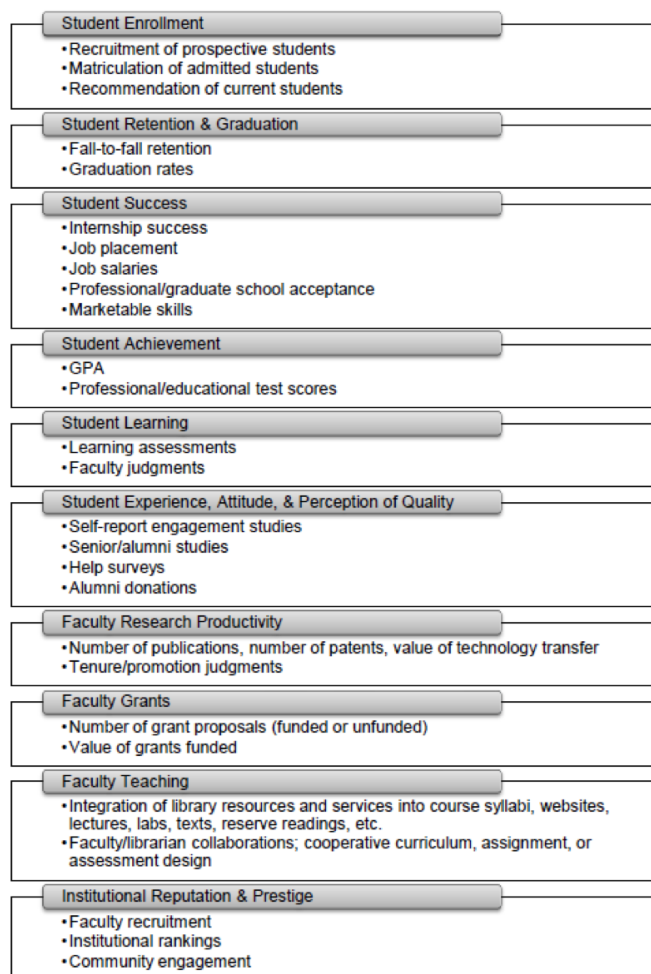


Figure 1. Areas of Library Value and Potential Surrogates

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