The Impact of Libraries as Creative Spaces

Lyn Thompson
Regional Partnerships
State Library of Queensland
Regional Partnerships (SLQ) supports libraries state-wide through funding, training and support

- 68 local governments operate a library service

- 340 public library sites including:
  - 250 Independent Libraries
  - 68 Rural Libraries Queensland
  - 22 Indigenous Knowledge Centres
Libraries are:

- Creative community spaces
- Connectors – physical and virtual
- Technology trendsetters
- Incubators of ideas, learning and innovation
Sharing library stories

- Library initiatives across the 4 key areas of VISION 2017 are showcased to enable idea and resource sharing state-wide

- Communication tools include:
  - Public Libraries Connect website
  - Public Libraries Connect newsletter (fortnightly)
  - NEW Public Libraries Connect blog
  - Social media (FB and Twitter)
What difference are libraries making?

QUT researchers were commissioned to:

- Investigate the impact of creative spaces and activities in public libraries
- Provide clear evidence of this impact
- Articulate the opportunities to further embed creative spaces in public libraries or community spaces
The Impact of Libraries as Creative Spaces

- Search [www.plconnect.slq.qld.gov.au](http://www.plconnect.slq.qld.gov.au) for the full report, including:
  - Contextual review of what creativity, space and place mean
  - Literature review on the evaluation of creative activity in libraries and creative spaces generally
  - Interviews and observational field research at 4 selected Queensland libraries:
    - Cleveland Library
    - Helensvale Library
    - Ayr Library
    - Roma Library
  - An evidence-based Creative Spaces Impact Framework
Contextual review

Creativity Can Be

Relatively Novel
Knitting might be new to someone who has never done it before.

Intrinsic in Purpose
The process of meeting to knit is the purpose rather than the outcome of the scarf that is made.

Extrinsic in Purpose
The process of meeting to knit is connected with making things to sell at a local market.

Formal and Informal
An activity might be highly structured with defined outcomes (formal) or a loose, unplanned activity relying on serendipity and curiosity (informal). Knitting classes as compared with a client organised knitting group for instance.

Collective and Individual
Knitting together or alone.
Literature review
Creative Spaces Impact Framework
Understanding the framework

| 4.1 | Community ownership, strength and identity |
| 4.2 | Cultural diversity and inclusiveness |
| 4.3 | Social capital |
| 4.4 | Social interaction and socialising |
| 4.5 | Localised service provision |
| 4.6 | Cooperation, coordination, collaboration, sharing and reciprocity |
| 4.7 | Trust (in community) |
| 4.8 | Self-organisation |
| 4.9 | Resilience |

| 5.1 | Audience |
| 5.2 | Artist/performer/maker |
| 5.3 | Sharing of public culture |
| 5.4 | Emotional connection and experience |
| 5.5 | Play and leisure |
| 5.6 | Celebration |
| 5.7 | Creation and dissemination |
Digital media package

- Also available on www.plconnect.slq.qld.gov.au are videos, photos and digital stories (case studies) that showcase creativity and illustrate the use of the framework for measuring community benefits of library activities, such as:
  - story / baby rhyme time
  - code clubs and robotics
  - 3D printing
  - seniors’ computing classes.

Case 1 – Ayr - Diane
How do you measure impacts or benefits?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERIA</th>
<th>IMPACT INDICATORS</th>
<th>AIM</th>
<th>RATING</th>
<th>AVERAGE VALUE</th>
<th>NAME OF ACTIVITY</th>
<th>ACTIVITY CATEGORY</th>
<th>TARGET AUDIENCE</th>
<th>ACTIVITY DATE</th>
<th>FREQUENCY</th>
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<td>4.4</td>
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<td>Seniors</td>
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LIBRARY SERVICE: BURDEKIN SHIRE COUNCIL – AYR LIBRARY
Seniors’ computing class
Case 4 – Coding and Robotics - Redlands
Using the framework - Robot bootcamp

ACCESSING RESOURCES
Access to robotics equipment “most had never seen”; try before you buy/ can’t afford to buy

IDEA BUILDING
Introduction to new software / development of robots

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT
Enabling young people to gain skills in coding, wiring and robotics

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
Allowing young people to connect in an informal learning environment

HEALTH AND WELLBEING - Offering a fun activity that particularly benefited children who were shy and development of fine motor skills

CULTURAL PARTICIPATION - exposure to STEM culture

ECONOMIC PRODUCTIVITY — potential future occupation

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT — building trust in library staff and a place provided by their local government
How to get started

• View the case studies online or in the full report to learn how the framework applies to activities you may already be offering.

• Download the User Guide to begin:
  - Improving data collection and analysis
  - Targeting creative activity to community needs
  - Configuring spaces to make creative places
  - Train and develop library staff.
Libraries as Creative Spaces Cycle

There is no right or wrong time to start using the framework!
Survey says.....

• The results achieved from using this framework can be useful to highlight the results achieved from delivering creative library activities and responding effectively to community needs.

• You can use these results to report on success and advocate for future funding or additional Council support.
Use your results!

• Spruik the value of your library and the difference it is making to the lives of your community.
• Tell the human side of the story – accompany your data with a ‘good news story’ or case study
• Monitor trends in your data and look for gaps in areas you are not delivering on
• Ask for customer feedback and base your ratings on this input
Any questions?

AN ONLINE VERSION OF THIS REPORT CAN BE FOUND AT: