Public Library Vision and Funding Agreement Review

Public Consultation Report

Northern Territory Government
Department of Tourism and Culture

Contents

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

Public libraries exist to serve and support the communities in which they are located. As such, it is important to ensure that communities are central to the planning, development and vision of library services in regions. The involvement of communities ensures that public library services in regions are relevant and specific to the communities that they serve.

With this considered, the Northern Territory Library ("NTL"), engaged KPMG to undertake a public (community) consultation exercise to support the development of a vision for the future of public library services in the Northern Territory ("NT" or "Territory").

Through this engagement, consultation activities were undertaken across six different locations across the Territory, including; Darwin, Katherine, Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Nhulunbuy and Palmerston, to ensure that the broad range of community types and contextual differences between them were able to be reflected in consultation outcomes. KPMG also developed an online survey for completion by the public in relation to their use of library services. The focus of these activities was to gain insights on how public libraries in the Northern Territory are being used currently, and how the community would like to use and see in their public libraries in the future. Throughout October and November 2016, KPMG consulted with approximately 165 members of the community face-to-face, and received 244 completed online surveys and an additional 54 surveys that were registered as incomplete.

The outcomes of consultation activities will be used by Northern Territory Library to develop, in collaboration with local government, a new vision for public library services in the Northern Territory.

Key outcomes of public consultation activities focussed on library operations, and results have been classified into the following themes - Collections, Learning and Programs, Technology, Staff and Services and Spaces and Places. A summary of key findings is below.

Collections

- Hard-copy books are still relevant and highly desirable for a large number of library patrons. The popularity of magazines and newspapers across the library service was highlighted as important.

- 92% of online survey responses indicate that respondents believe the right balance of collections is between 50%-75% print with the remaining portion made up of digital collection materials.

- The availability of collections that represent a variety of cultures, both in hard-copy and digital format, was considered as important across all locations.

- Local history and the availability of local history collections was considered as particularly important. Furthermore, the local history collections that are available in audio-visual format (e.g. recordings, videos, pictures, stories and song collection) was highlighted as particularly important for Indigenous members of the community.

- There is a strong desire for larger collections and greater variety of books and digital material in local libraries including recently released materials.

Learning and Programs

- Significant interest and importance was placed on the role of public libraries in the delivery of computer, device and other digital literacy training.

- Programs and activities for children (0 – 5 years) was highlighted as not only incredibly important, but also widely popular across the Northern Territory.

- A significant degree of interest was shown relating to the opportunity for recreational and community led programs.

- There was an overarching need for increased awareness of the breadth of programs delivered by the public library service. Many members of the public that engaged in discussions were unaware that many programs and services were available through their local public library.

- High importance was placed on the need for homework and tutoring assistance programming, particularly for school aged children.

Technology

- Technology, through the availability of devices and digital collections, is becoming an increasingly popular method of accessing information and library services.

- The popularity of computer, wifi and device charging availability through public library services was significant across all locations.

- The desire for more recent and up to date digital collections, particularly for gaming and DVDs, was highlighted as something that could be improved across public library services in the Northern Territory.

- Technology was considered as a fundamental facilitator for the use of libraries by job seekers, tourists and tourism services, and small business owners.

- Improvements to wifi/internet connectivity and the speed and reliability of computers was highlighted as important by many of the respondents. Respondents also indicated that libraries should play in increasing role in obtaining new technology as it is released to support equity of access for all members of the community.

Staffing and Services

- There is a significant desire for revised and extended opening hours in many locations. Many members of the public expressed the need for opening hours outside of regular business hours including late nights, Saturday afternoon and Sundays.

- The extension or alteration of library opening hours was highlighted as the most significant factor that would encourage people who do not currently use the public library service to utilise their local public library.

- The ability to access library resources '24/7' through digital platforms, such as BorrowBox, was acknowledged by many as very positive and a service that would be greatly beneficial to supporting their lifestyle and other commitments within their communities.

Spaces and Places

- Public library spaces are very highly valued by members of the public. Libraries are considered to be safe and cool (air conditioning) and as such, provide a good area to promote social inclusion and connectivity; particularly for more disadvantaged members of the community.

- The allocation of space into different 'zones' was consistently highlighted as important to support all members of the community.

- In some locations, it was noted that the availability of parking and access to the library space was somewhat constrained which influenced people's ability or propensity to visit their local library.

- The availability of community meeting rooms, including those for hire outside of standard business hours, was highlighted by members of the public as being particularly desirable in a library service.

- While many survey respondents highlighted a preference for standalone library buildings, other members of the public indicated that the co-location of public libraries with other activity generators and services, such as; childcare providers and cafes, would be well received as it would support community interaction.

- Outreach services were also consistently highlighted by members of the public as being particularly relevant in a Northern Territory context to connect with members of the community that may not be able to visit the physical library in their community.

Introduction

The Northern Territory Library ("NTL") engaged KPMG to undertake a public consultation activity about the future of public library services in the Northern Territory ("NT" or "Territory"). The outcomes of these activities will be used to inform the development of a new strategic vision for public libraries across the Northern Territory.

Purpose and Objectives

This report focuses on the outcome of activities from the public consultation facilitated by KPMG during October and November 2016. It provides a record of key themes and outcomes with a particular focus on feedback derived from the public online survey as well as face-to-face public consultation activities with library patrons in six locations (Tennant Creek, Katherine, Alice Springs, Nhulunbuy, Palmerston and Darwin).

The consultation process conducted by KPMG is timely considering the need for more specificity around service baselines to respond to rapidly changing technology, ways in which library services are delivered and greater expectations from users.

This specific consultation process is an important tool to develop a clear understanding of the needs, expectations and gaps in library service delivery that may currently exist. Findings from consultation activities will be key to the development of a new vision for public library services in the Northern Territory that suitably reflects Local Government frameworks and advances in the digital and service delivery environment. This will be of great benefit to ensuring that the library service delivered to the communities of the Territory is one that truly reflects their context, needs and expectations.

Context

The Role of Public Libraries in Communities

Public libraries play a vital role in society. They act as valuable cultural infrastructure, facilitating the development of social capital and acting as a repository for knowledge and individual learning.

The landscape in which public library services are delivered has however undergone significant change over the last 10 years. Public libraries are no longer seen solely as places to borrow books but rather as centres that offer a broad range of opportunities. These opportunities include:

- accessing online content;

- engaging with new technology and improving digital literacy;

- taking part in community workshops and social activities;

- volunteering at community events; and

- discovering local heritage and culture.

The importance of libraries and the role they play is highlighted in the new edition of *Guidelines, Standards and Outcomes Measure for Australian Public Libraries*[1]. This document identifies six areas in which public libraries deliver community benefit. These include:

- literacy and lifelong learning;

- informed and connected citizens;

- digital inclusion;

- personal development and wellbeing;

- stronger and more creative communities; and

- economic and workforce development.

These outcomes contribute to the economic and social value added by libraries and are experienced throughout the Territory and Australia. As a result, individual and overall community wellbeing is significantly increased leading to stronger community cohesion, sense of belonging and empowerment. These factors are of high importance to key public library stakeholders across the Northern Territory.

---

[1] Guidelines, Standards and Outcome measures for Australian Public Libraries, July 2016

Overview of Activities

There were two specific methods utilised by KPMG to undertake engagement activities with the public in relation to the public library service across the Northern Territory. These methods included:

1 Targeted face-to-face engagement with library users in six different public libraries through a 'public forum' process; and

2 An online public survey.

These activities are outlined in more detail below and overleaf.

Public Forums

KPMG conducted public consultation activities in six different locations. These locations included Tennant Creek, Katherine, Alice Springs, Nhulunbuy, Palmerston and Darwin (Casuarina).

Public consultation activities were held over the course of two hours in each of the public libraries in these locations. Time in each location was spent facilitating one-on-one discussions with library patrons in five libraries, with one in a group forum setting. KPMG's original scope was to undertake six separate group sessions. This approach was recalibrated once 'on the ground' to ensure more effective engagement outcomes. As a result, a one-on-one consultation method was utilised in the majority of instances.

KPMG engaged with approximately 165 members of the public who represented a diverse cross section of the community. The most attended sessions were in the larger libraries with more populated library catchments, however the ability to engage in very specific and targeted discussions in smaller libraries also elicited significant outcomes. A snapshot of public forum participation at each location is outlined below.

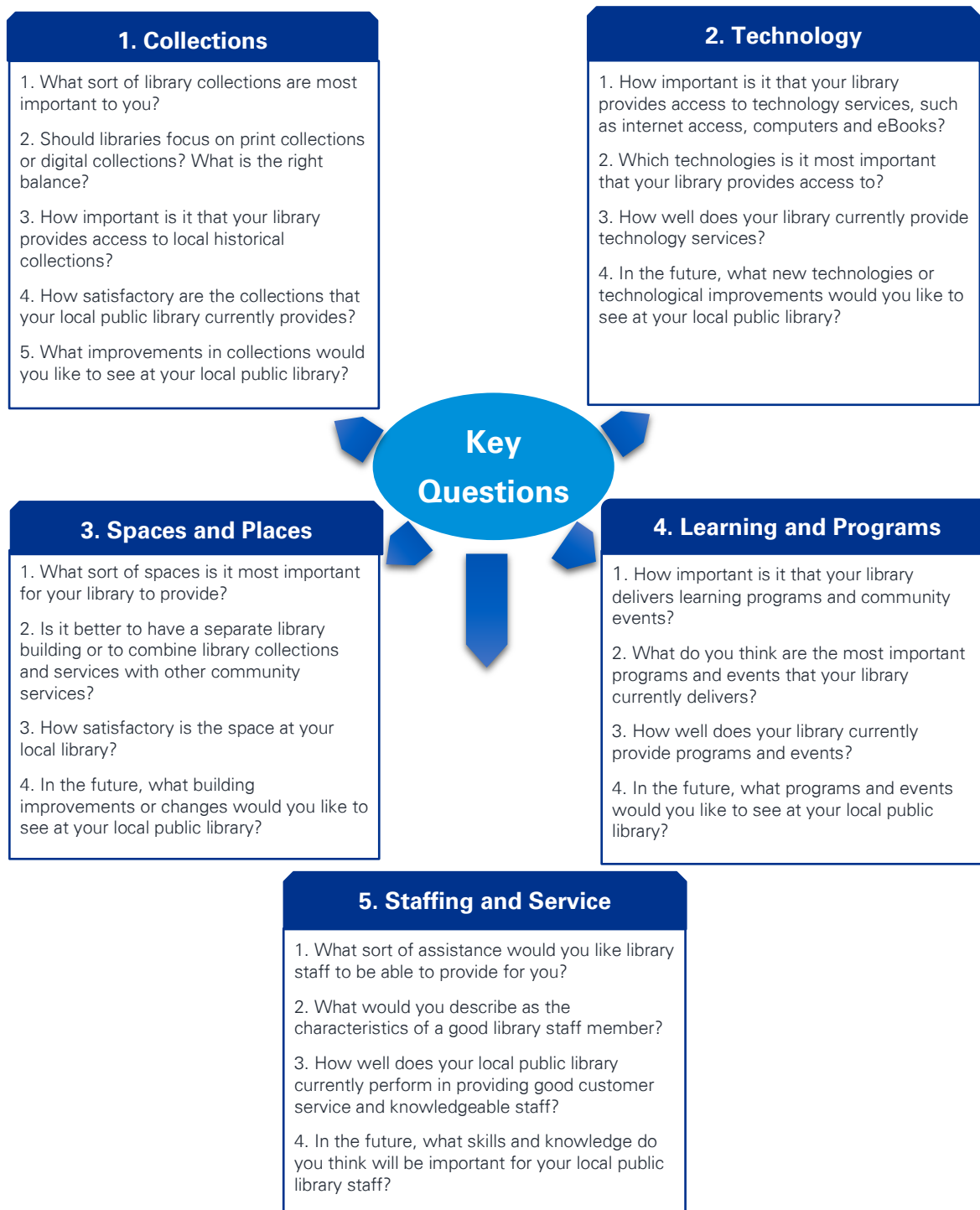| Date	Location	Attendees	Description
10 Oct	**Tennant Creek**	6	Participants in consultation activities were representatives of both the Indigenous and non-Indigenous community in the Tennant Creek area. Additionally, library staff members were involved in consultation activities.
11 Oct	**Katherine**	40	Participants in engagement activities included a significant representation of tourists, seniors and mothers (with children in attendance) attending programs.
12 Oct	**Alice Springs**	55	Participants in engagement activities were from diverse cultural backgrounds and demographic groups including Indigenous youth, school children, university students, tourists, seniors and young children's writers program participants.

Date	Location	Attendees	Description
25 Oct	**Nhulunbuy**	15	Given the public library's co-location within school boundaries, a significant proportion of participants engaged over the course of consultation activities were school children ranging from the age of 12-16. Other people engaged in consultation activities included representatives from Indigenous assistance organisations and a small number of Indigenous men.
26 Oct	**Palmerston**	45	Participants in consultation activities represented a broad cross-section of the community and included school children, online business owners, seniors, tertiary education students and other people using the library space as an area of respite and relaxation.
27 Oct	**Darwin**	4*	Participants included one staff member and three library patrons.

*Note: A group based consultation approach with library patrons was utilised at this location. The engagement method utilised was more formal and relied upon self-nominated participation by interested library patrons.

Discussion Focus

In order to develop a clear understanding of the way in which library users use their public library, as well as their views on the future of their library service, KPMG utilised a structured approach to engagement activities with members of the public. The key areas of focus, including the questions used to guide discussions, are outlined below.

1. Collections

1. What sort of library collections are most important to you?

2. Should libraries focus on print collections or digital collections? What is the right balance?

3. How important is it that your library provides access to local historical collections?

4. How satisfactory are the collections that your local public library currently provides?

5. What improvements in collections would you like to see at your local public library?

2. Technology

1. How important is it that your library provides access to technology services, such as internet access, computers and eBooks?

2. Which technologies is it most important that your library provides access to?

3. How well does your library currently provide technology services?

4. In the future, what new technologies or technological improvements would you like to see at your local public library?

Key Questions

3. Spaces and Places

1. What sort of spaces is it most important for your library to provide?

2. Is it better to have a separate library building or to combine library collections and services with other community services?

3. How satisfactory is the space at your local library?

4. In the future, what building improvements or changes would you like to see at your local public library?

4. Learning and Programs

1. How important is it that your library delivers learning programs and community events?

2. What do you think are the most important programs and events that your library currently delivers?

3. How well does your library currently provide programs and events?

4. In the future, what programs and events would you like to see at your local public library?

5. Staffing and Service

1. What sort of assistance would you like library staff to be able to provide for you?

2. What would you describe as the characteristics of a good library staff member?

3. How well does your local public library currently perform in providing good customer service and knowledgeable staff?

4. In the future, what skills and knowledge do you think will be important for your local public library staff?

Online Survey

To complement face-to-face engagement activities, KPMG also developed an online survey to elicit feedback from a larger catchment of library users and, importantly, non-users. An online survey was determined to be the most appropriate complementary method of engagement as it had the potential to engage the entire community, rather elicit feedback from library patrons only. Feedback from non-library users was seen as essential in understanding the additional services that might attract new patrons to the libraries. The survey was open to the public for four weeks and was circulated/promoted in stakeholder local newsletters, websites, social media outlets and published on the NTL website. It was designed to collect qualitative and quantitative data from both users and non-users of public libraries in the Northern Territory.

To ensure a degree of consistency in the level of enquiry undertaken throughout public consultation activities, the survey was developed in accordance with five key relevant areas of focus including; collections, technology, spaces and places, learning and programs and staffing and service. The purpose of the survey was to:

1. Provide an opportunity for the Northern Territory community to comment on the current public library service.

2. Collate information about how public libraries in the Northern Territory are currently utilised.

3. Provide an opportunity for the Northern Territory community to provide input into the future planning of public library services.

Survey Participation

The online survey received 244 complete and 52 incomplete unique respondents (n=298). The answers provided by incomplete respondents have been included in the survey analysis conducted by KPMG as they highlight key themes regarding the library service. Throughout the survey, several questions allowed multiple answers from one respondent contributing to a higher count of responses. The number of responses to these questions are displayed as (n="x").

Note: Library staff members were encouraged to complete the survey based on their observations of library users.

Key respondent statistics are provided below:

Gender of Respondents (n=292)

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to disclose

2%
19%
79%
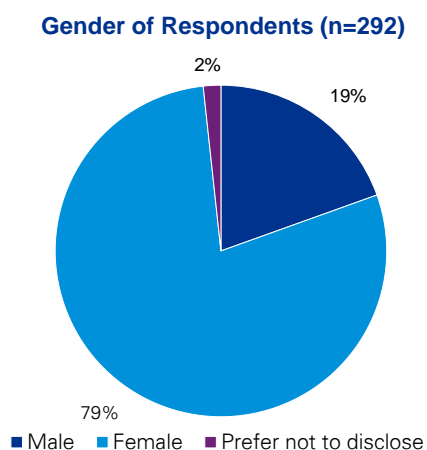
A large proportion of respondents to the online survey (230) identified themselves as women, followed by men (57) and those that did not want to disclose their gender.

Are you a Local Government Library member? (n=292)
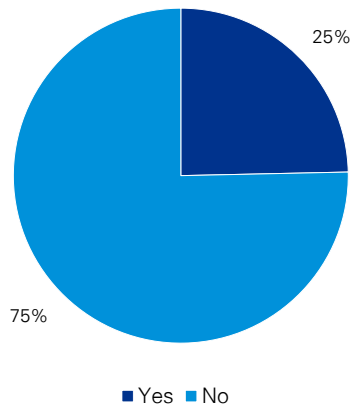
Approximately 75% of respondents indicated they were not a Local Government Library member.

Age of Respondents (n=279)
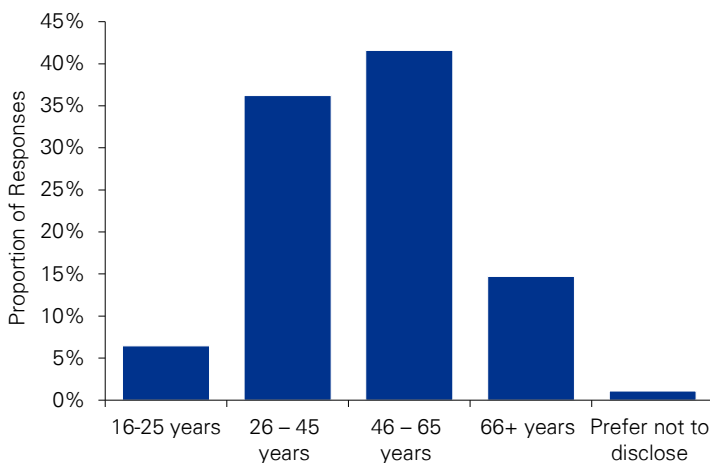
The largest response category with approximately 42% of respondents indicate they are aged 46-65 years old, followed by 26-45 year olds (36%).

KPMG's survey required guardian supervision for any respondent under the age of 16. This was a distinct limitation to gathering specific feedback from the younger age groups. Partly to address this limitation, NTL conducted targeted youth consultation activities concurrently with KPMG's survey. While the data from NTL's process has not been specifically reported on as part of KPMG's scope of works, it can be confirmed that there were a number of consistent themes in the summary information provided to KPMG by NTL regarding the future of public libraries in the Northern Territory as provided by youth age groups engaged as part of NTL consultation activities.

Region of Residence (n=297)
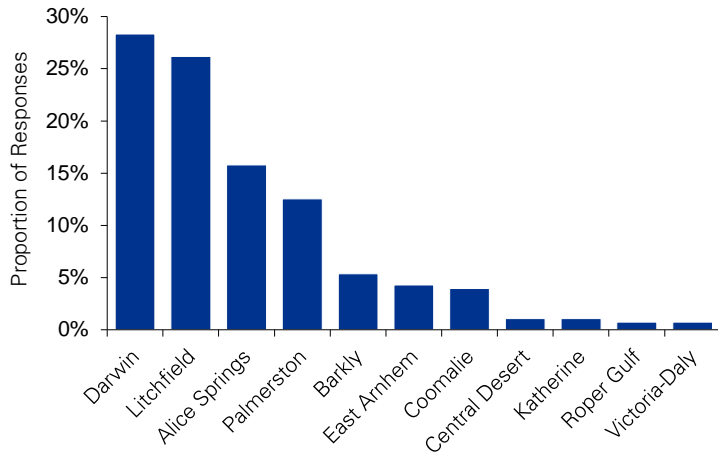
Residents of the metropolitan and semi-rural regions of Darwin, Litchfield, Alice Springs and Palmerston account for approximately 83% of respondents. This indicates a greater engagement with public libraries than those located in more remote locations.

There were no respondents from the regions of Belyuen, MacDonnell, Tiwi Islands, Wagait and West Arnhem.

Do You Use a Local Library? (n=278)

7%

93%

■ Yes ■ No
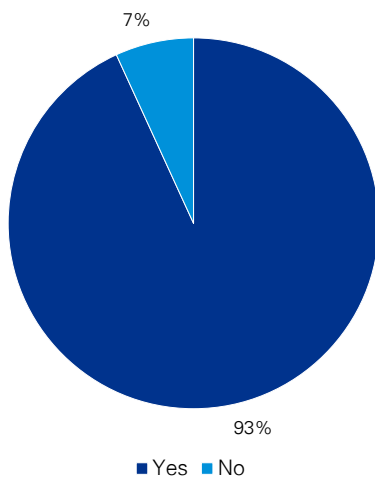
93% of respondents indicated they used their local public library. The large proportion of "yes" responses is to be expected given that library users had a higher exposure to the existence of the survey than non-users.

Main Reasons for Not Using the Library (n=23)
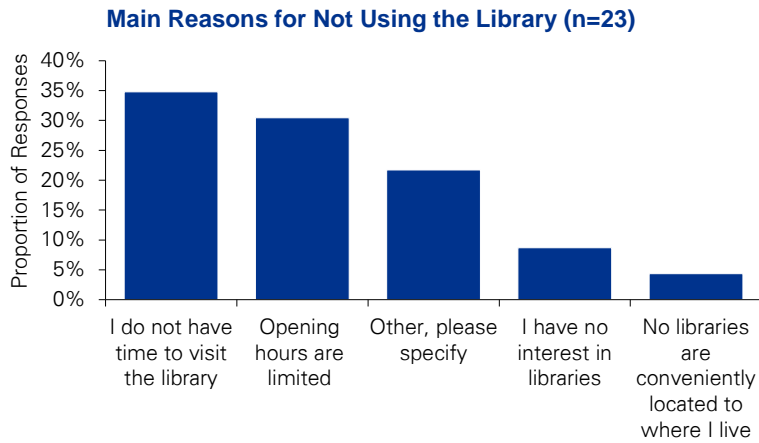
Note: KPMG acknowledge the small sample size for this response category however also acknowledge that the two strongest responses may be interrelated, and that although the sample size is small, the responses are aligned with feedback gained through consultation activities that referred to opening times that need to be tailored to those times when people are not otherwise occupied.

Supporting the previous finding that 93% of survey participants were library users, the low number of responses to this particular question was not surprising. It is however interesting to note that 'not having enough time' was the main reason for not attending (35%) followed by limited opening hours (30%).
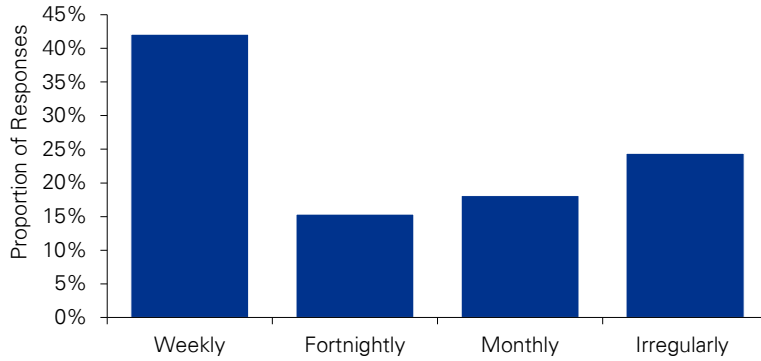
Other responses provided included as reasons for not using the library were limited collections/new books, slow internet and no need to visit.

What Would Encourage You to Use the Libary? (n=26)
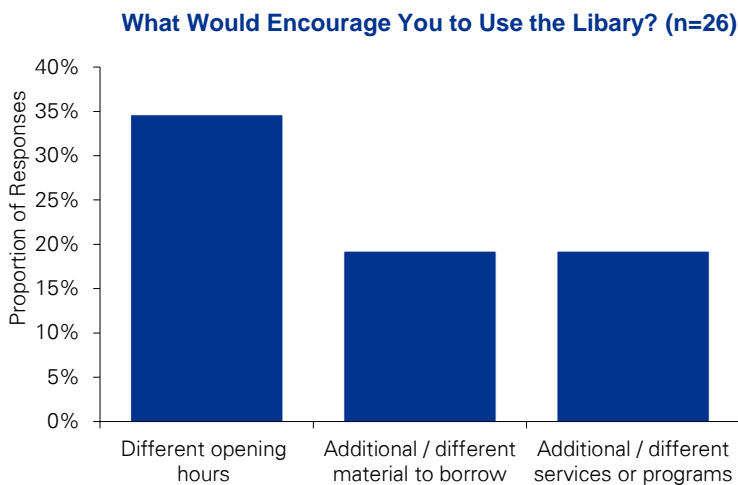
Complementing the findings of the previous question, approximately 35% of respondents indicated that different opening hours would be most likely to encourage them to use the library, followed by additional /different material and programs. This is a direct link to the 30% of respondents that highlighted that the primary reason for not accessing the library was unsuitable opening hours.
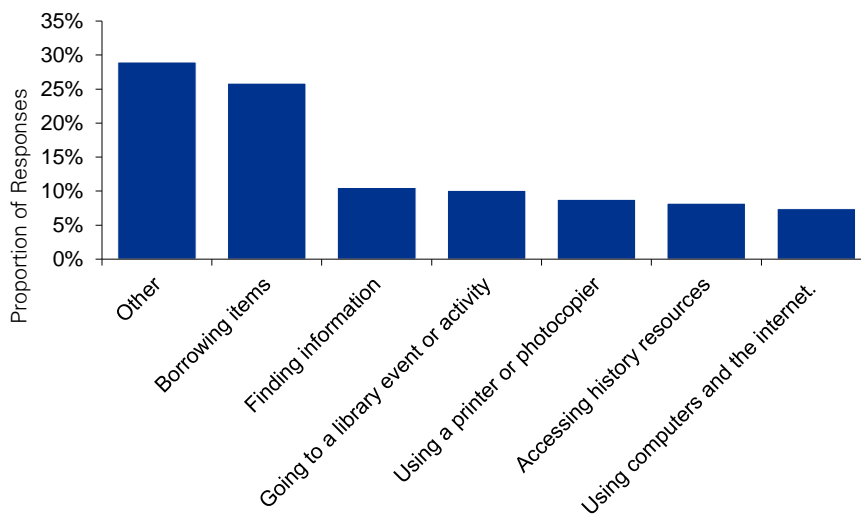
Other items raised by respondents included availability of ebooks and online content, special events/expos and faster internet.

How Often Do You Use the Library? (n=254)

Proportion of Responses (y-axis, 0% to 45%)

Category	Value
Weekly	~42%
Fortnightly	~15%
Monthly	~18%
Irregularly	~24%

Respondents indicated a high level of engagement with approximately 42% attending public libraries on a weekly basis. This was followed by 24% of respondents that indicated they attend a public library on an irregular basis.

What Are the Main Reasons for Visiting Your Local Library? (n=862)

Proportion of Responses (y-axis, 0% to 35%)

Category	Value
Other	~29%
Borrowing items	~26%
Finding information	~10%
Going to a library event or activity	~10%
Using a printer or photocopier	~9%
Accessing history resources	~8%
Using computers and the internet.	~7%

Respondents indicated there are many reasons for visiting libraries. The single biggest specific reason was borrowing items (26%), followed by finding information (11%). "Other" comprises of many collective activities including seeking assistance with government programs, volunteering and using eBooks.

Summary of Findings

Public consultation activities highlighted a number of key findings that will be pertinent to the development of a strategic vision for public libraries in the Northern Territory. These key findings have been categorised in accordance with the following themes, consistent with the structure of both the public forums and online survey.

- Collections

- Learning and Programs

- Technology

- Staffing and Services

- Spaces and Places

The below information is a collated summary of key themes from both public forum and online survey responses.

Collections

A significant amount of discussion during the course of public consultation activities centred on the collections, both physical and digital, held by each public library service. Key findings pertaining to 'Collections' are outlined below:

- It was highlighted that hard-copy books are still relevant and highly desirable by a large number of library patrons. Many members of the public across all locations highlighted that while the need for increased access to digital collections was important, there is significant value in ensuring that hard-copy books remain available through the public library service. This was supported in the online survey results, with 92% of respondents indicating that between 50% and 75% of collections should be in print format, with the remainder in digital format.

- The availability of a range of hard-copy collections was considered as important for a number of library patrons. Feedback indicated that magazines and newspapers across the library service were popular, particularly in more remote locations. Patrons noted that it was important to ensure that magazine and newspaper collections remain up to date.

- The availability of collections in languages other than English, both in hard-copy and digital format, was considered important. Further, the availability of culturally specific collections that were targeted across a variety of age groups was also highlighted as important.

- It was highlighted that both hard-copy and digital collections need to reflect the demographics across the regions, including catering for senior age groups with larger font size printed materials and digital collection materials.
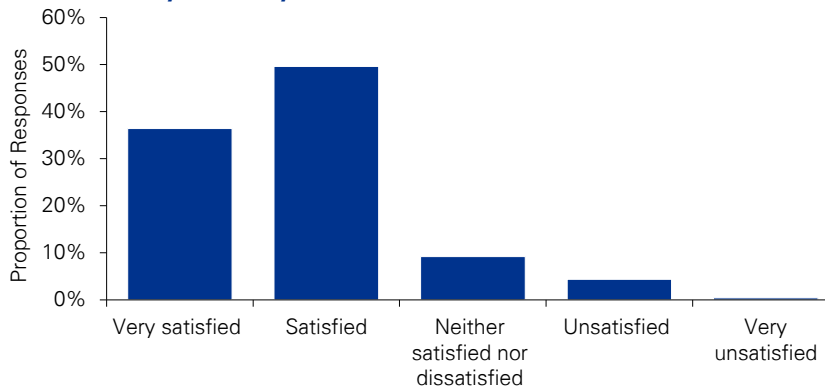
- The significance of local history and the availability of local history collections was considered as particularly important for public libraries across the Northern Territory. Many members of the public believed that there should be some form of local history retained in public libraries to 'showcase' their community and provide a service for public interest. This was particularly the case in remote Indigenous communities.

- Feedback indicated that local history collections available in audio-visual format (e.g. recordings, videos, pictures, stories and song collections) are preferred by Indigenous members of the community. In this regard, it was noted that improvements could be made to the systematic collection of voice recordings of local elders and community leaders, as well as the collection of pictures and the recording of song and dance from particular regions. Significantly, it was highlighted that the improved availability and promotion of audio-visual local history collections in local public libraries may encourage increased use by Indigenous and other community members.

- It was however noted across multiple locations that the 'target audience' of the local history collections was unclear. There is a perception that the current format, display and use of some local history collections in public libraries across the Territory is primarily focused on serving tourists and specific researchers; rather than for Indigenous and local community members. Some members of the public noted that they would be more compelled to utilise local history collections if they contained more audio-visual materials and were displayed in a way that encouraged use by people with lower levels of literacy.

- Question was raised in some locations, particularly in Pine Creek where the library is co-located with a museum, about the role of public libraries as a 'collector' of local history materials compared to that of local and centrally delivered museums across the Territory. Members of the public generally felt that public libraries do play a role in preserving and celebrating local history, but no overarching consensus was reached regarding the dissemination of roles and responsibilities of this between public library services and museum services across the Territory.

Survey Summary: Collections

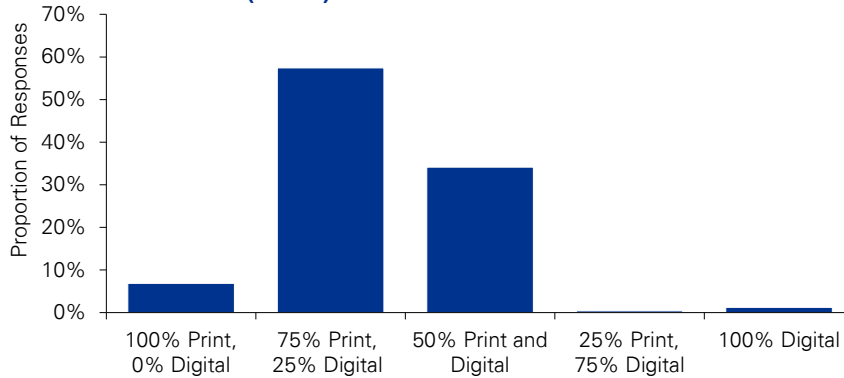**What Library Collections Are Most Important to You? (n=721)**
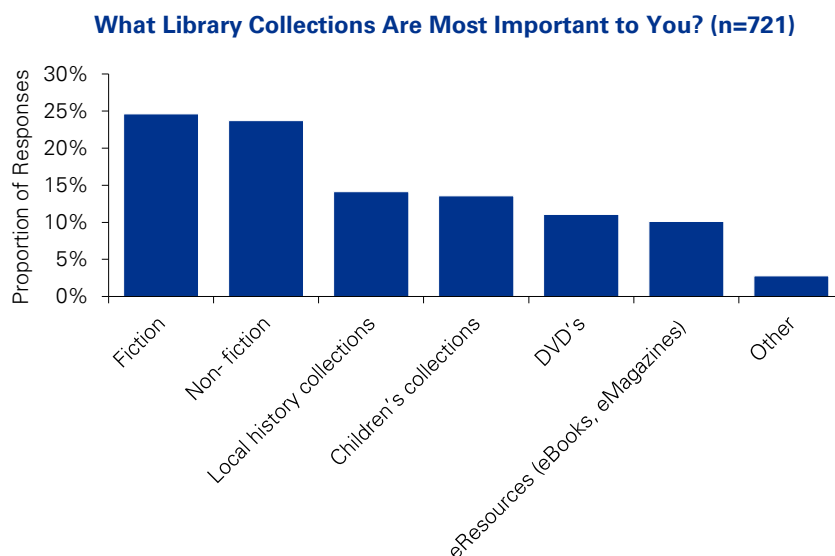
Approximately half of the responses indicate that Fiction and Non-fiction are the most important collections. This is followed by local history collections which accounted for 14% of responses.

How Satisfied Are You With the Collections that Your Local Library Currently Provides? (n=250)

Proportion of Responses

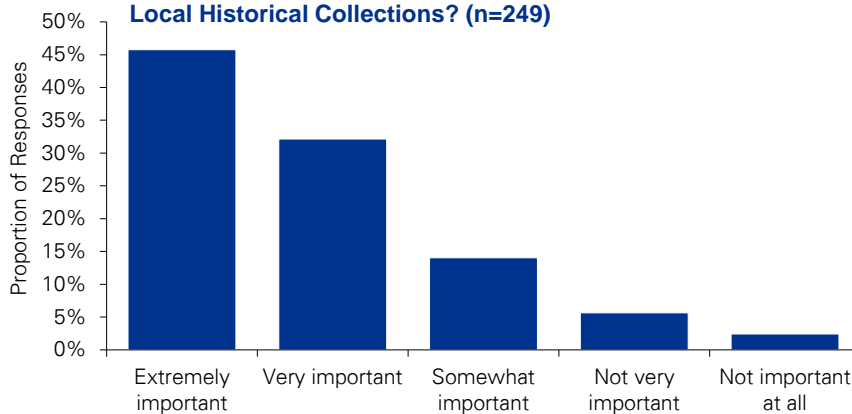| Category	Value (approx)
Very satisfied	36%
Satisfied	49%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	9%
Unsatisfied	4%
Very unsatisfied	0%

Respondents have indicated a high degree of satisfaction of the collections provided. Approximately 86% are either very satisfied or satisfied and only 4% are unsatisfied or very unsatisfied.

What is the Right Balance of Print Collections or Digital Collects (n=249)

Proportion of Responses

Category	Value (approx)
100% Print, 0% Digital	7%
75% Print, 25% Digital	57%
50% Print and Digital	34%
25% Print, 75% Digital	0%
100% Digital	1%

Approximately 92% of the responses indicate that respondents believe the right balance of collections is between 50%-75% print with the remaining portion made up of digital collection materials.

How Important is it that Your Local Library Provides Access to Local Historical Collections? (n=249)

Proportion of Responses

Category	Value (approx)
Extremely important	46%
Very important	32%
Somewhat important	14%
Not very important	5%
Not important at all	2%

Respondents recognise the role libraries play in ensuring local history and stories are accessible. Approximately 46% of responses indicate it is extremely important, followed by 32% suggesting it is very important.

In the Future, What Improvements in Collections Would You Like to See in Your Local Library? (n=147)

Selection of responses only.

- "To keep up to date with local historical information, i.e. books, publications, newspapers and presentations by people with a good knowledge of local history" (Library user, Litchfield, 46-65yrs)

- "Fiction collections need to be kept up to date and relevant as students, especially year 11 and 12's, and anyone doing university courses, need to be able to show they can get information from a range of sources. Non-fiction needs to be constantly kept relevant and provide a range of different interests. There is nothing like being able to physically read a book. The Litchfield collection is extremely important and needs to have a librarian at Taminmin that can originally catalogue resources." (Library user, Victoria-Daly, 46-65yrs)

- "That reappraisal of the local collection be made from time to time when a digital version of it becomes available the printed version could go into the general collection and borrowed rather than remain in the 'not to be lent out' category." (Library user, Alice Springs, 26-45yrs)

Key Theme: The majority of responses indicated they would like to see their local library have a larger collection and greater variety of books and digital material. A number of respondents also indicated that they would like to see improvements through libraries purchasing more recent publications as the current catalogue is often perceived to be 'dated'.
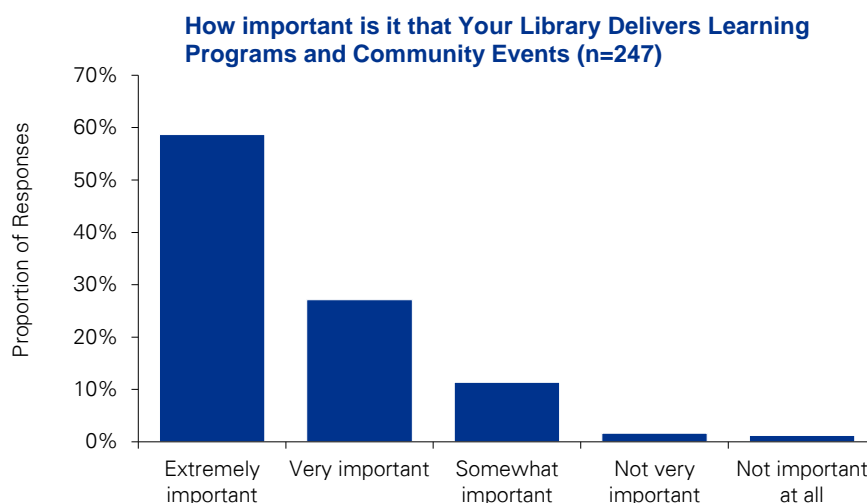
Learning and Programs

The role of the library in facilitating learning and access to information through the delivery of specialised programs was a key topic of discussion in public consultation activities. The key outputs of discussions relating to 'learning and programs' are outlined below:
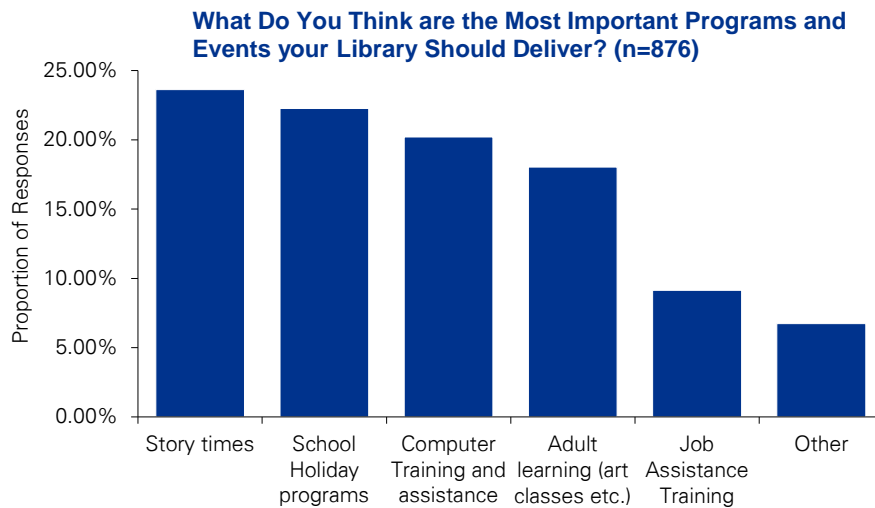
- Significant interest and importance was placed on the role of public libraries in the delivery of computer, device and other digital literacy training. The growing role of technology in everyday life was highlighted as significant, with members of the public, particularly in more senior age groups, acknowledging that increased access to training and assistance in this field would improve their ability to undertake everyday activities such as banking, access to government services and communicating with friends and relatives.

- Programs and activities for children (0 – 5 years) are extremely popular across the Territory, as highlighted by observations by the public, library staff and supported in survey results, with storytime being rated as the most important program delivered. Across all regions, it was noted that these programs were highly valued by attendees. It was acknowledged in a number of locations that at times, these sessions are over-subscribed and libraries are unable to accommodate all those wanting to participate.

- A significant degree of interest was shown relating to the opportunity for recreational and community led programs. Survey results indicated that 92% of respondents thought it was somewhat to extremely important for libraries to offer learning programs and community events. Members of the public highlighted that there are particular groups in the community, particularly from Indigenous communities, that have skills and stories that could be shared in a relaxed setting in the library. Ideas from the public regarding these sessions concentrated mostly on participating in craft activities and other recreational programs that focused on enjoyment and socialisation.

- There was an overarching need for increased awareness of the breadth of programs delivered by public libraries. A number of members of the public that engaged in discussions were unaware that many programs and services were available through their local public library. It was highlighted by some library patrons that there should be programs, mostly targeted at school-aged children, focused on developing awareness and understanding of how to use public libraries and the services that are offered.

- High importance was placed on the need for homework and tutoring assistance programming, particularly in locations that experienced a high number of school-aged patrons during the times immediately following school hours.

Survey Summary: Learning and Programs

How important is it that Your Library Delivers Learning Programs and Community Events (n=247)

Respondents indicated that the delivery of learning programs and community events are of significant important. 97% of responses indicate that the delivery is at least somewhat important or greater.

What Do You Think are the Most Important Programs and Events your Library Should Deliver? (n=876)

There is a reasonably varied response to the question, indicating broad community needs and expectations. Approximately 24% of responses indicate story times should be delivered, followed by school holiday programs (22%). Other programs of importance highlighted by respondents include seniors' events, book clubs, STEM programs and author talks.

How Well Does Your Current Library Provide Programs and Events (n=245)
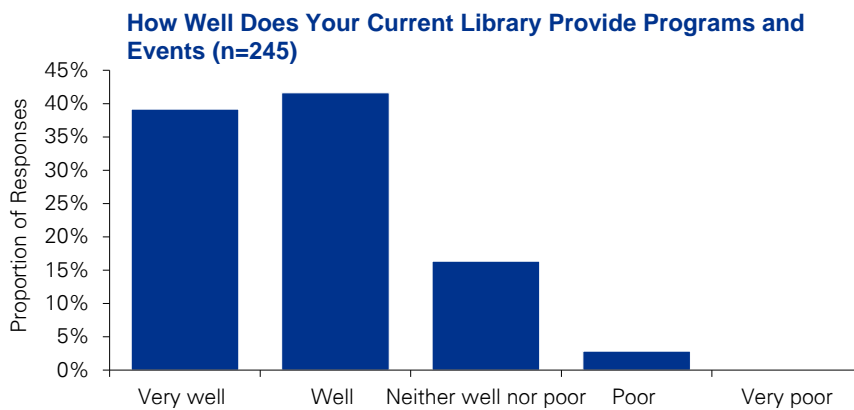
The majority of responses (81%) indicate that libraries are delivering programs either very well or well. Only a small proportion (3%) believe that they are delivered poorly.

In the Future, What Type of Programs or Events Would You Like to See at Your Local Library? (n=118)

Selection of responses only.

- *"What's currently offered is good. (I would like to see) computer lessons on a more regular basis (and) I'd like to see more youth involvement in the library. It's a bit hard out (SIC) when the kids are bussed home on an afternoon after school finishes. Maybe there could be some more buses (maybe smaller ones) later in the afternoon to help the kids get home. (I would also like) improved house bound services for seniors and those unable to come to the library due to an accident or illness"* (Library user, Litchfield, 46-65yrs)

- *"I would like more training for the older clients on internet, computers and iPad's and any other training to help the older person to keep up with the forever technique changing world"* (Library user, Darwin, 46-65yrs)

- *"(I would like) public conversations with local personalities - e.g. council members, businesses, local authors, artists, services. As an opportunity for increased*

involvement of the general public with their community" (Library user, Palmerston, 46-65yrs)

- *"More Community events. A great way for isolated families to connect with each other and with service providers. It's one of the few places where everyone knows they are welcome." (Library user, Central Desert, 46-65yrs)*

> **Key Theme:** Many of the responses highlighted a desire to see more author talks and interaction with other members of the community through book clubs, youth groups and digital literacy learning groups.

Technology

The growth and influence of technology on public library services was a key focus of discussions during public consultation activities. There was wide acknowledgement that the role of technology is increasing, however there was a mixed reaction regarding its place within the public library service in the Territory. Key themes relating to technology generated through public consultation activities are detailed below:

- Technology, through the availability of devices and digital collections, is becoming increasingly popular, with many members of the public highlighting that "technology is becoming part of a standard way of life."

- The popularity of computer, wifi and device charging availability through public library services was significant across all locations. It was highlighted by many members of the public that the availability of technology including DVDs, video games and other devices, provides a level of 'equity' within communities, particularly in areas with a higher proportion of community members with lower socioeconomic standing.

- The desire for more recent and up to date digital collections, particularly for gaming and DVDs, was highlighted as something that could be improved across public library services in the Territory. Additionally, the limited access of wifi in some locations (half an hour to two hours) was considered to be insufficient, with many members of the public having a strong desire for unlimited and improved wifi connectivity in public library locations.

- Many members of the public highlighted that technology provides a platform for library usage beyond 'traditional' services. Technology was considered as a fundamental facilitator of the use of libraries by job seekers, tourists and tourism services, and small business owners undertaking activities to assist their personal endeavours.

- It was noted by a number of members of the public that the library is a place that supports small business and tourism endeavours through the provision of wifi and computers, as well as spaces and places that support these economic activity generating activities. Some members of the public utilise the library space to undertake activities such as banking, updating of websites and booking tourism activities. Of those members of the public that utilised the library for these purposes,

there was strong support for the library to support these activities and the adequate provision and maintenance of technological services is critical to these activities.

Survey Summary: Technology

How Important is it that Your Local Library Provides Access to Technology Such as Internet access, Computers and eBooks? (n=245)
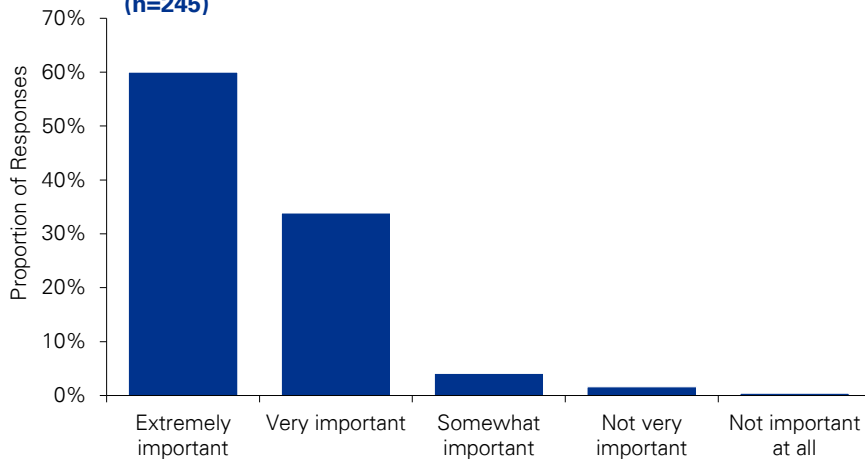
The increased importance of access to technology and digital literacy is reflected in the responses with approximately 60% indicating it is extremely important followed by 34% indicating it is very important.

Which Technologies are most Important for the Library to Provide? (n=267, multiple selection options)
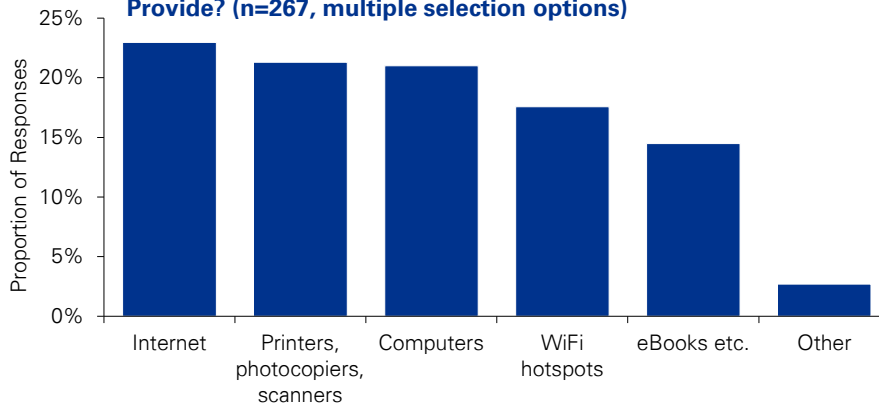
Provision of the internet was indicated as the most important (23%) followed by the provision of printers, photocopies, scanners (21%). Other items respondents' indicated to be important included academic databases, tablets and DVD viewing areas.

How Well Does Your Local Library Provide These Resource (n=241)
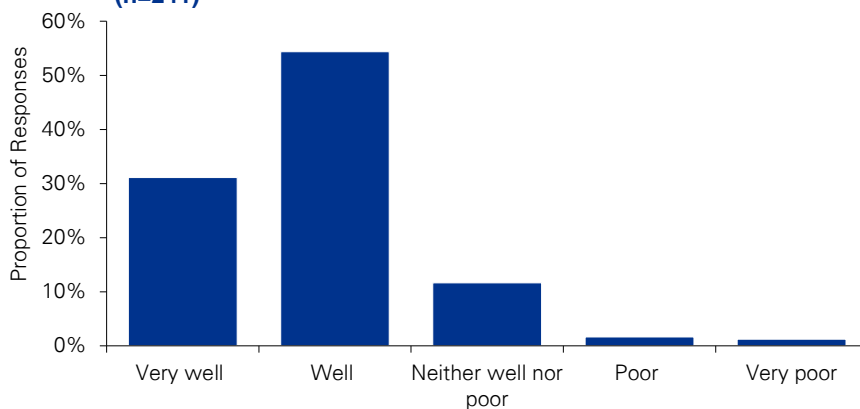
The responses indicate that local libraries are doing a good job at providing new and existing technology. 31% of responses indicate local libraries are doing very well at providing technology, followed by 54% which indicate they are doing well.

In the Future, What New Technologies or Technological Improvements Would You Like to See at Your Local Library? (n=94)

Selection of responses only.

- *"I would like to see the Library (be) given the opportunity to provide up to date technical improvements to enable students and Library members to be able to keep up to date and function to their best in this modern age"* (Library user, Litchfield, 66+yrs)

- *"I would really like to see less computers and more places for people to BYO devices and access digital catalogues etc"* (Library user, Palmerston, 26 - 45yrs)

- *"It is important to keep up to date with modern technologies and make this available to both school age and the general populations. This is important for seniors, especially considering the fact that as new technology gets settled in some of the older systems are discontinued which means that many people get left behind and are no longer able to easily get access to say Banking, Newspapers etc"* (Library user, Litchfield, 66+yrs)

Key Theme: Improvements in the wifi/internet and speed of computers is raised by many of the respondents as a key area local libraries need to address. Respondents also indicate that libraries should play in increasing role in obtaining new technology as it is released. This includes new tablets, 3D printers and new methods of accessing additional information.

Staffing and Services

Staffing and services were discussed with many members of the public throughout consultation activities. The key themes from these activities include:

- In some areas, there is a significant desire for revised and extended opening hours. Many members of the public expressed the need for opening hours outside of regular business hours including late nights, Saturday afternoon and Sundays. It was identified that this would allow students who might play sport or visit other businesses that were open on a Saturday morning to utilise the library for research and homework during those times that they are not otherwise committed with social activities.

- The ability to access library resources '24/7' through digital platforms, such as BorrowBox, was acknowledged by many as very positive and a service that would be greatly beneficial to supporting their lifestyle and other commitments within their communities.

- Positive feedback was received with regard to staff at libraries, with many members of the public expressing gratitude towards the assistance and support received from library staff members.

What Sort of Help Would You Like Library Staff to be Able to Provide? (n=757)
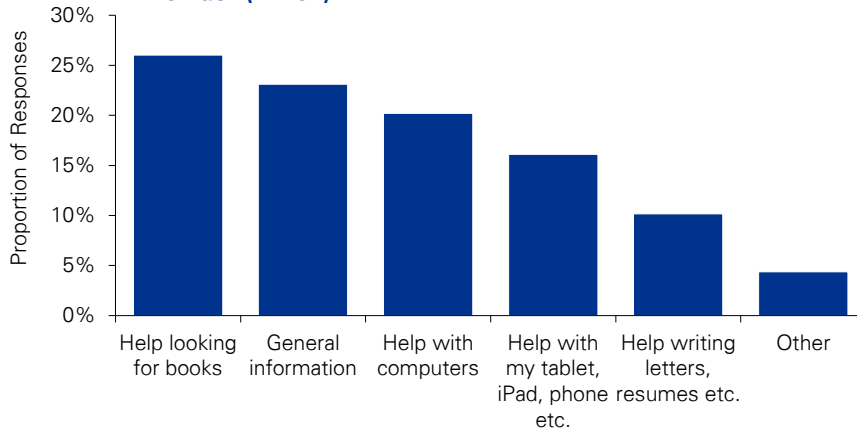

Helping to find books and gaining general information represents approximately 50% of the help respondents believe libraries should provide. Other forms of help noted include information about the local area, resumes, and academic/school research

How Well Does Your Local Library Current Perform in Providing Good Customer Service and Knowledgable Staff? (n=234)
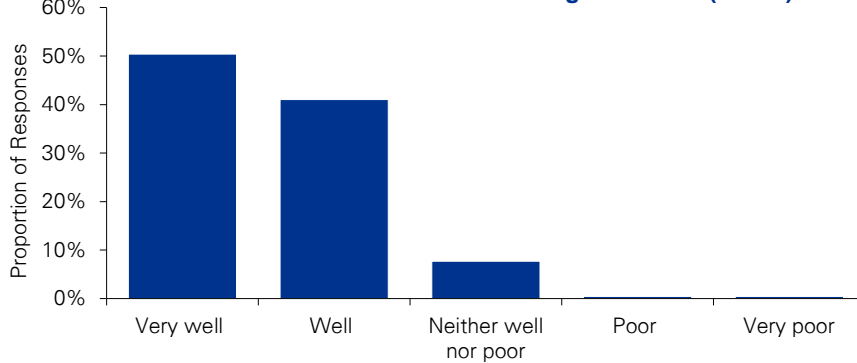
91% of the responses indicate that local library staff provide customer services and knowledge very well and well.

How Well Does Your Current Local Library Do in Providing Services for ALL Members of the Community? (n=250)
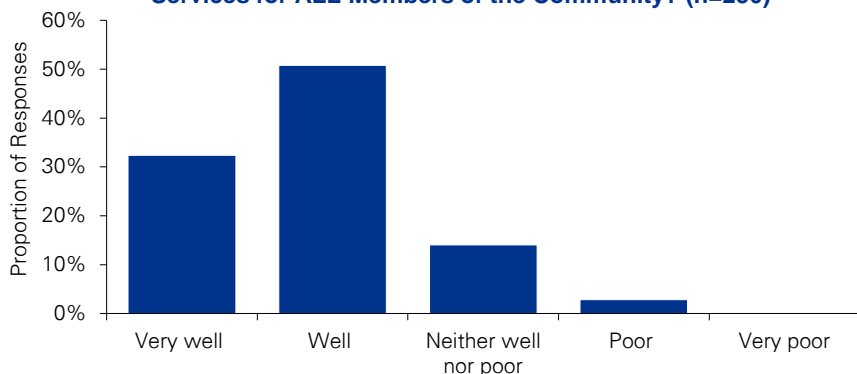

The majority of responses (83%) indicate that their current local library provides services for all community members either very well or well. Only 3% suggest the services are poor for some members of the community.
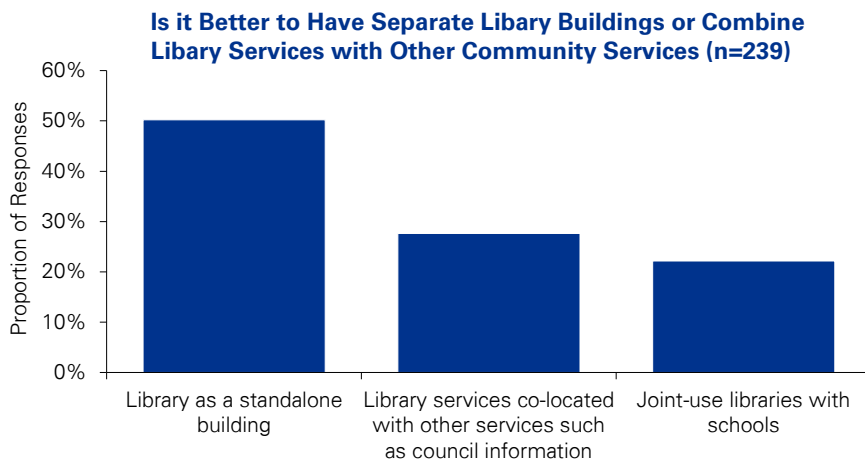
Spaces and Places

Spaces and places were significant themes that arose through public consultation activities across all locations. Key discussion outcomes are detailed below:

- Public library spaces are very highly valued by members of the public. Libraries are considered to be safe and cool (air conditioned) and as such, provide a good area to promote social inclusion and connectivity; particularly for more disadvantaged members of the community.

- The allocation of space into different 'zones' was consistently highlighted as important in order to ensure that all members of the community can utilise the library space in their preferred way – for example, dedicated 'quiet zones' and zones for 'child play and noise' was highlighted as important within each library space. Further to this, the availability of a range of seating and other furniture, for example bean bags, couches and desk space, was seen as crucial to ensuring that within the physical walls of the library, there are spaces that suit a diverse cross section of the variety of library users.

- In some locations, it was noted that the availability of parking and access to the library space was somewhat constrained. This was most notably the case at libraries located within schools. At these school-based community libraries, access by members of the public was somewhat controlled and limited to ensure compliance with school property visitor and child safety requirements. This was identified as a significant constraint by members of the public.

- The availability of community meeting rooms, including those for hire outside of standard business hours, was highlighted by members of the public as being particularly desirable in a library service. It was however noted that those available community rooms at public libraries are often fully utilised and unable to be accessed by new users. Additionally, the availability of rooms and dedicated spaces for tutoring and learning assistance programming was highlighted as important for public libraries.

- It was acknowledged by a number of members of the public that the library provides a place for community and social interaction. With this considered, a number of members of the public acknowledged that the co-location of public libraries with other activity generators and services, such as; health services, child development services, other government service providers and cafes, would be well received and supported by library users.

- The idea of library outreach services was also consistently highlighted by members of the public as being particularly relevant in a Territory context. A number of ideas were generated, however the most consistently supported ideas included pop-up libraries at shopping centres and local markets and facilitating partnerships with local play groups and aged care facilities and residences to take books and devices to their locations.

Survey Summary: Spaces and Places

What Sort of Spaces is it Important for Your Library to Provide? (n=1,172)
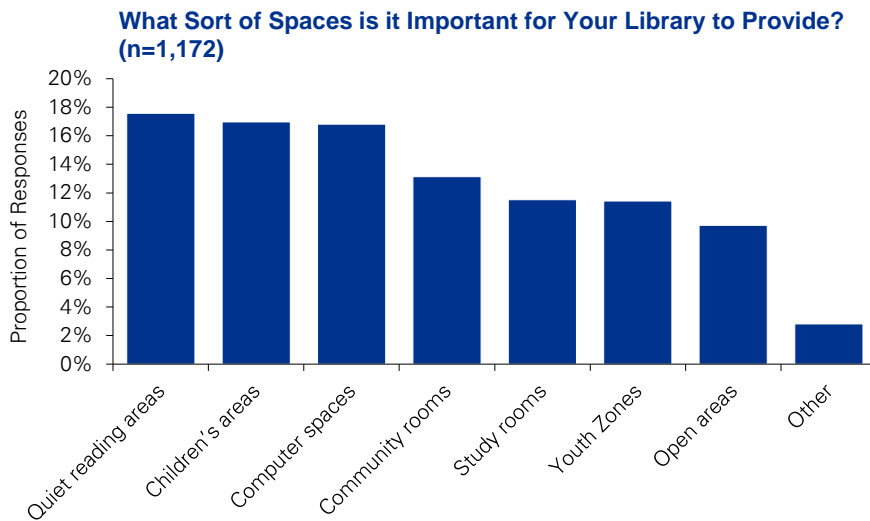
Quiet reading areas, children's areas and computer spaces were considered the most important aspects of library spaces, accounting for 51% of the responses. There was a very varied alternative responses which highlighted outdoor areas, creative spaces, café, teaching areas and multipurpose rooms as important.

Is it Better to Have Separate Libary Buildings or Combine Libary Services with Other Community Services (n=239)

Approximately half of responses indicate a preference for libraries to be standalone buildings, followed by colocation with council buildings (28%) and joint use with schools (22%).

How Satisfied Are You with the Space at Your Local Library? (n=236)
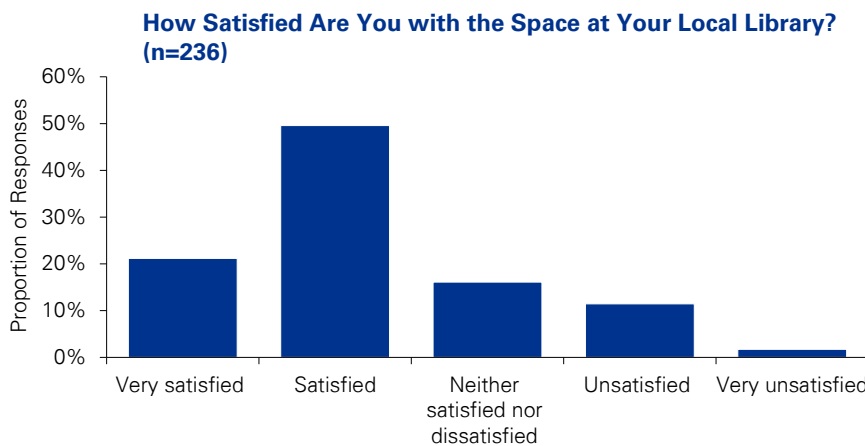
The survey results highlight that respondents are satisfied with the space at libraries they attend. Approximately 21% of responses indicate they are very satisfied, followed by 50% indicating they are satisfied.

In the Future What Building Improvements or Changes Would you like to see at Your Local Public Library? (n=127)

Selection of responses only.

- *"At the very least (I would like to see) a community area/room with kitchen attached so that programs have a separate but connected area to run from with dedicated storage space for materials. This could be extended to include a computer area for senior classes, technology classes, and an open seating area with access to coffee, well away from the books" (Library user, Barkly, 46-65yrs)*

- *"(I would like) more defined spaces. (This could include) enclosed medium sized study/meeting rooms equipped with SmartBoards and data projectors or similar for small groups of students, community groups. (I would also like) comfy lounges and armchairs, coffee tables for quiet reading, near the magazine section (where patrons are) allowed to bring in a coffee. (Another area could include) comfy furniture for teens, small groupings within a larger space (as well as an) early childhood space with fun furniture, parenting resources and comfortable furniture within the space, so they can easily supervise children while accessing resources, and might encourage informal conversations amongst parents. (Lastly, a) junior fiction section with furniture for primary school students (would be good) so (they are) not competing with teens for a space" (Library user, Palmerston, 45-65yrs)*

- *"More space, improved internal furnishings, eg shelving, lounge chairs, better computer tables and chairs, new children's furniture. (I would also like) more free and easy to access parking"(Library user, Litchfield, 45-65yrs)*

- *"(I would like to see) children and DVD watchers separated from the main area. It's often so noisy I leave. Even in the main area people talk at top volume and play music and no one asks them to quieten down. Kids story time is important but not where everyone has to listen to it. Surely the library is a quiet space for reading, study and thinking and a refuge from the fast and noisy world" (Library user, Alice Springs, age not disclosed)*

- *"(I would like) more focus on quiet areas or greater separation between quiet areas and public spaces/areas where activities take place" (Library user, Darwin, 26-45yrs)*

- *At the very least a community area/room with kitchen attached - so that programs have a separate but connected area to run from with dedicated storage space for materials. This could be extended to include a computer area for senior classes, technology classes - and an open seating area with access to coffee etc. - well away from the books." (Library user, Barkly, 46-65yrs)*

- *"Extended opening hours beyond 10am-4pm Tues to Friday, 10am-1pm Saturday and not at all on Monday. What about an evening?" (Library user, East Arnhem, 45-65yrs)*

Key Theme: A common response is that areas within the local libraries are not well defined enough which leads to degrees of 'noise pollution' in areas that are designated as quiet zones. Respondents recognise the importance of collaboration and group activities but believe it impacts on some users of the library who prefer for the library to be a quiet space. Many respondents also indicate that they would like improvements to their library's size as it often becomes crowded in the carparks and inside the building.

Specific feedback from remote communities

As part of public consultation activities, specific efforts were made to engage with a diverse representation of the community. Whilst KPMG visited 6 specific locations across the Territory, NTL staff assisted patrons in remote locations to complete the survey to provide insight as to the services that are valued by members of Indigenous communities. The below table highlights the Indigenous communities from which survey responses were received. In total, 13 surveys were received.

Location	Number of Survey Responses
Elliott	4
Angurugu	1
Barunga	1
Galiwin'ku	1
Lajamanu	1
Mataranka	1
Milingimbi	1
Ramingining	1
Umbakumba	1
Wadeye	1

NTL will be continuing to undertake consultation with Indigenous communities beyond the framework of the KPMG consultation to ensure that the new vision for public library services in the Northern Territory is reflective of all community groups.

The highlights from survey responses from Indigenous communities are provided below:

Collections

- The highest ranking primary reasons for visiting the library included borrowing items, using the photocopier and computers, meeting friends or family, accessing local history and cultural material.
- The highest ranking collections in Indigenous communities were non-fiction and local history collections.
- The overwhelming majority of users were satisfied or very satisfied with their library's current collections.
- The overwhelming majority believed the right balance of print to electronic collections is somewhere between 50-75% print and 25-50% digital.
- All users rated the importance of maintaining local history collections as "extremely" or "very" important.
- All responses received around collections indicated a preference towards more local history collections and an increase in the number of "local language" resources.

Learning and Programs

- The most important programs and events offered by libraries are storytimes, computer training and assistance and school holiday programs.

(KPMG notes that this should be explored further in the Indigenous context, as "story times" may not refer only to children's stories as is generally accepted in the larger town centres; it could in fact refer to sharing of traditional stories amongst all within the community.)

Technology

- Access to technology such as internet, computers and eBooks was regarded as "very" to "extremely" important across all responses. Responses further indicated that the most important technologies were internet, wifi hotspots and computers.
- There were very mixed responses as to how well libraries provide technological services. Most feedback centred on internet speed and aging and limited number of computers.

Staffing and Services

- There was no one specific type of help provided by staff that stood out as being more important than another, and libraries ranked well in terms of the assistance that is provided by staff.

Spaces and Places

- The highest ranking spaces were quiet reading, children's, and computer spaces.
- There were mixed responses around how satisfied users were with their library spaces, with all ranging from neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, to up extremely satisfied.
- Feedback around improvements to be made to library facilities focussed on size of buildings and items of capital repair.

Additional Findings

In addition to the above key themes, a number of open ended questions were provided in the online survey to gain a more intimate understanding of the respondent's needs and expectations pertaining to the future of public library services in the Northern Territory. A selected number of responses have been provided below.

Are There Parts of the Community that are not properly Served by Your Local Library? (n=99)

Selection of responses only.

- *"(I think they) should do a library bus for people who live far or even close but with reduced mobility" (Library user, Litchfield, 26-45yrs)*

- *"Not sure if they go out to the elderly, disabled or unwell that are not able to get to the Library. But that would be another great community service." (Library user, Alice Springs, 26-45yrs)*

> **Key Theme:** Many respondents do not believe their local library adequately caters for disadvantaged groups such as the elderly, youth, people without access to transport, the Indigenous population and other ethnic groups. However, several respondents indicated their library is already making good progress in these areas.

In Your Opinion, What is the Most Important Service that Your Library Should Offer in the Future? (n=180)

Selection of responses only.

- *"(I believe it is) a community space, to learn, share knowledge, enjoy events, with a visible commitment to social inclusion and digital inclusion" (Library user, Palmerston, 46-65yrs)*

- *"(It is an area for) utilising new technologies, however at the same time making sure historical records are kept and the hard copy books are kept up to date. From a parents point of view, I want my child having an upbringing with books, and when she's older being able to access and use modern technologies such as computers and iPads well (as this is the future)" (Library user, Barkly, 26-45yrs)*

- *"A quality service (is the most important aspect). It doesn't matter how large the library is, it must offer what the locals want and not what someone higher up thinks it wants. Different types of libraries different communities. It's not a one type of library fits all people. Each library has its own unique footprint, with strong ties to the community it serves and be able to have the funds and staff to be able to provide this service" (Library user, Litchfield, 46-65yrs)*

- *"(The most important service is) to be there for the community, to offer the services they already do well and hopefully be able to expand slowly into the others where they*

don't have anything at present i.e. youth and more for seniors" (Library user, Litchfield, 46-65yrs)

- *"It is one of the few 'hubs' that are accessed by all sorts of people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. If there are community programs being run with minority groups and staff who have an awareness of the resources that exist in the community that may further help individuals if they voice concerns would be very beneficial and meaningful to those individuals……... Staff being aware of this potential and aware of the resources in the community could provide information material for that person to seek appropriate advice or help." (Library user, Alice Springs, 26-45yrs)*

- *"Free access to a wide range of books and general information items. Programs that encourage reading and learning/education. Community minded events and information forums" (Library user, East Arnhem, 26-45yrs)*

> **Key Theme:** The large majority of respondents indicate that they view their local library as a repository of information and space that facilitates community interaction and socialisation. They believe their library plays an important role in preserving local history and culture while simultaneously maintaining relevance and keeping up with changes in technology.

Is There Anything Else You'd Like to Say about the Future of Public Libraries in the Northern Territory? (n=125)

Selection of responses only.

- *"They are really important! I read about the closure of libraries in the UK with dismay, or libraries being run only by volunteers, and I fear for the future there. I would hate to see that happen here. Libraries can be sanctuaries, sources of solace, inspiration, information, community, awareness (eg that other languages have books and newspapers, etc, too!) They are such valuable community resources" (Library user, Darwin, 46-65yrs)*

- *"Being a remote area - Public Libraries have the opportunity to be the backbone of a community. Indeed, how a Library runs often says more about the community than anything else. We need them to be more accessible, especially in the more remote areas. We need more programs/activities/classes offered for the local community - all areas, not just for the Indigenous, although we need programs for them as well." (Library user, Barkly, 46-65yrs)*

- *"Generally libraries are known to be safe, welcoming spaces which places them in an ideal position to contribute to bridging the gap that is still very evident in the Northern Territory. Also, in a transient environment, the library is the one place that a newcomer to town can walk into and feel they are in a familiar place." (Library user, Coomalie, 46-65yrs)*

- *"Libraries are the corner stone of any community and extremely important. Even though new technology doesn't interest me personally I think it's important for libraries to keep up so that the younger generation feel the need to access the library. I think the library has a role to play in the upkeep of our language and grammar standards." (Library user, Coomalie, 46-65yrs)*

Key Theme: The respondents indicate that they value libraries in the Northern Territory very highly, however many have concerns about the future of their services. Several respondents raised issues relating to the lack of funding the libraries receive which may impact on their ability to meet the changing and growing needs of the community.

Public Library Services of the Future

There are a number of key outputs from public consultation activities that will be useful to developing the new vision for public library services across the Territory. These include:

1   Public libraries are highly valued by local communities.

2   In many areas, there is a distinct desire for increased public library services, including outreach and digital services.

3   The extension of opening hours in particular locations would significantly encourage increased public library use.

4   The role of libraries is changing dramatically from a more traditional, operational role, to a progressive and interactive role in facilitating social cohesion and development.

5   Public libraries in many parts of the Territory are viewed and utilised as 'community hubs'; with significant value placed on the personal interactions and spaces within the physical bounds of the library walls.

6   The role of libraries in protecting and celebrating local culture and heritage is particularly important to members of the public.

7   Public libraries play a significant role in facilitating social equity within communities through the open access to information, service and program support, collections and devices.

Next Steps

The key findings from public consultation activities will be used to inform the development of a new vision for public libraries in the Northern Territory.

Contact us

Kristy Rees
Partner
+ 61 (08) 9892 9037
kristyrees@kpmg.com.au

Jemima Hutch
Manager
+ 61 (07) 3223 9425
jhutch@kpmg.com.au

www.kpmg.com.au