

Public Libraries Evaluation Network



Culture Counts, with the support of Public Libraries Australia (PLA), is inviting libraries to participate in the Public Libraries Evaluation Network, a nation-wide data collection initiative to better understand and illustrate how libraries generate vital outcomes for their communities.

Project Aim

Measuring the role of libraries and the value that communities place on them gives libraries the ability to engage more deeply with the public, impact the community more strongly, and provide an evidence-based argument for greater funding. The nation-wide initiative was designed to test metrics and methods for capturing and analysing feedback on library outcomes, to ensure ease of use and appropriateness from an Australian library perspective. The project builds on research undertaken in Australia and internationally, with metrics aligned with the 2016 ALIA, APLA and NSLA draft national standards and guidelines for outcomes measurement, and the UK Inspiring Learning for All (ILFA) social and learning outcomes.

Project Background

30 libraries from around Australia participated in the first year of the Public Libraries Evaluation Network, using the Culture Counts platform to collect data about the vital impacts of libraries. Since the project started in July 2019, more than 13,000 survey responses have been received, representing diverse regions and communities across Australia. Each library surveyed their community at least once annually on perceptions, use and outcomes associated with the library. Network members were provided with standardised and customisable survey templates to enable easy collection of feedback, and all results contributed to a large body of evidence about the value of the sector as a whole.



30

participating libraries



6

states and territories



13,600

survey responses

Project Results

The research shows that communities overwhelmingly agree that libraries play an important role and are felt to be safe and welcoming places. Libraries are succeeding strongly in their traditional literacy and learning roles, while respondents also agreed that their library is changing and becoming more relevant to them and their needs. [View the snapshot report](#) containing aggregate data from the first year of the project.

A dynamic, filterable big data dashboard was developed to enable network members to:

- Deeply interrogate their data
- See how different demographics were impacted
- Compare results with other libraries
- Implement changes based off wider sector learnings

[Click here](#) to view the anonymised public version of the dashboard (with individual library, branch and state filters removed).

View the Public Libraries
Evaluation Network Dashboard



Project Feedback

Evaluation network members agreed that being part of the project helped them gain important insight into their library users' experience, and that these insights could be used to modify and improve services and provide input to strategic planning processes. Participant feedback demonstrates that the initiative has helped libraries involved to begin better understanding, illustrating and improving the vital outcomes they generate for their communities.



Very professional, great webinars.
Overall great product. **Librarian**

Project Update

The Evaluation Network will continue into 2021, and we encourage libraries from all parts of Australia to join the network and help to grow the database, insights and learning opportunities. The project will use the same base metrics and methodology to build on the existing data and findings, however further feedback will be sought into appropriateness of metrics for diverse communities, data use and reporting requirements. A key focus of the coming year's research will be the successful use of data, with new videos, case studies and webinar workshops on how to understand and use the data from the project in programming, resource allocation and other decision-making processes. We look forward to working with you!

To view an example library perceptions and outcomes survey in the Culture Counts platform, please scan the QR code.



Project Method

Each participating library will capture public feedback on library use, perceptions and the achievement of outcomes over a one-year subscription period, generating a set of data insights for libraries individually and as a group.

Component	Actions
CULTURE COUNTS SUBSCRIPTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Each library will receive a one-year subscription to the Culture Counts survey platform, including in-built metrics, survey templates and client support ▪ Participating libraries will be asked to use the platform to survey public library users at least once annually on outcome measures and usage and provide annual data related to library expenditure, collections, loans and visitation. In addition, each library will have the opportunity to conduct unlimited evaluations through the Culture Counts platform to measure the impact of their own library programs and activities ▪ It is recommended that libraries use a mix of methods to collect responses, including a mailout to library members; the option for self-complete on library computers, iPads or WiFi; and intercept interviews by librarians. This will maximise the ability for libraries to reach a diverse mix of library users ▪ Subscribers can view survey results and reporting throughout the project period in their own Culture Counts dashboard, with access to raw data, analysed results charts and pdf reports
STANDARD TEMPLATES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Survey templates with standardised metrics will be used to minimise the time burden on library staff, while maximising the ability for big data analysis and learnings across the project ▪ Each library will receive a standard survey template with a set of agreed questions covering overall library use, perceptions and outcomes ▪ An NSLA/ALIA statistics survey will also be provided to ensure input/output data (such as loans, stock, turnover and expenditure) is collected in a standardised way ▪ Event or program-specific survey templates will also be shared with libraries through the platform, enabling them to evaluate individual events or programs if they choose ▪ Libraries will have flexibility within the Culture Counts survey builder to develop and edit their own bespoke surveys, however this may not enable benchmarking

Project Method (continued)

Component	Actions
EVALUATION GUIDANCE & SUPPORT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Culture Counts will hold an individual onboarding session with each library where evaluation requirements for the project will be discussed along-side best practice evaluation and survey distribution method ▪ A support package will be provided to libraries with clear and concise guidance on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technical use of the Culture Counts platform - Purpose and rationale for the measures used - Data collection methods - Interpretation of data - Accessing big data via the dashboard ▪ Culture Counts will hold quarterly feedback sessions via webinar to enable participating libraries to connect with one another, look at the big data dashboard, and discuss implications and learnings. Webinars will be filmed to enable those not able to participate to watch at a time convenient to them ▪ A series of videos, case studies, and workshops will be implemented to delve more deeply into the successful use of data and the integration of data into decision-making processes ▪ A dedicated Culture Counts Client Relationship Officer will be available to receive support queries
BIG DATA DASHBOARD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Culture Counts will prepare a big data dashboard containing data that participating libraries choose to share with the project. All participants will be asked to share a minimum number of evaluations in order to contribute to the sector analysis ▪ The dashboard will enable the ability to view overall sector trends and the aggregate impact of libraries, as well as filter results by State, region, socio-economic status, user demographics, programs and other custom classifiers ▪ Culture Counts will input and update data on a quarterly basis from inception to enable participating libraries and PLA to access and get value from insights and learnings throughout the project
STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Culture Counts will provide a strategic alignment matrix to show how outcome metrics for use in the project align with National Standards and Guidelines for Australian Public Libraries, and the UK Inspiring Learning for All (ILFA) social and learning outcomes framework ▪ This will ensure that all data collected can be clearly reported against the achievement of important sector objectives
FEEDBACK & COMMUNICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Feedback from participating libraries may be requested on an ongoing basis, with a formal feedback survey delivered at the end of the annual project period ▪ Data and learnings generated by the group will be communicated to the broader library database periodically throughout the project

Security Information

Libraries do not need to install any programs or software in order to participate. The Culture Counts platform is cloud based and the databases are cryptographically secure to the standards of industry best-practice.

Culture Counts does not require access to private library data through the SIP2 protocol. A survey will be provided to capture input/output data such as lending statistics for use in big-data analysis.

Where Culture Counts collects or facilitates data collection in the public domain, data is anonymous by default and not linked with people's real identities. The privacy requirements applied to all subscribers of the system are detailed in the Culture Counts Privacy Policy at: <https://culturecounts.cc/support/privacy-policy/>

Other Details

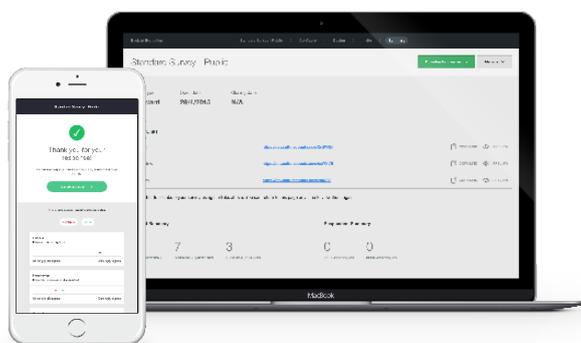
Participation in the Public Library Evaluation Network involves a annual fee of \$2,000. This covers all costs, including:

- A Culture Counts subscription, including easy to use survey tools, unlimited evaluations, and real-time results
- Survey templates containing outcome measures developed and tested with the library sector
- Onboarding and evaluation guidance from Culture Counts client managers
- Quarterly webinar sessions to discuss evaluation best practice, share data insights and provide feedback
- Videos, case studies and workshops on successful data use
- Access to individual and nationally benchmarked reporting outputs
- Ability to view sector trends and insights via a big data dashboard

Are you a library operating in a local government population of less than 5,000 residents? In support of the sector, Culture Counts is offering a 50% subsidy to help you participate in the project. Gain valuable community feedback, and contribute to big data learnings across a broad mix of libraries (different sizes, locations and demographics). Contact us at hello@culturecounts.cc to find out more.

Get Involved

We would love to provide you with a complimentary demo session of the platform, dashboard and project benefits at your convenience.



Please express your interest by:

- Completing the registration form <http://bit.ly/PLEN2020>
- Or email hello@culturecounts.cc

All Culture Counts subscriptions will run for a 12-month period from date of sign-up. Culture Counts will provide a letter of agreement to interested libraries, including full terms and conditions and data sharing requirements. Culture Counts encourages a diverse mix of libraries from around Australia to take part in this exciting initiative, with the extensive data collected generating broad sector trends and many valuable insights into library impact.