

# YOURTUTOR ONLINE HOMEWORK HELP SERVICE EVALUATION STATE LIBRARY OF QUEENSLAND

MARKET RESEARCH REPORT 20 MAY 2009

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### I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### 1.1 RESEARCH PURPOSE

State Library of Queensland supports delivery of the 'Yourtutor online homework help service' made available through public libraries, Indigenous Knowledge Centres and via State Library E-Services membership.

To determine whether further commitment is made beyond 30 June 2009, State Library of Queensland commissioned Footprints Market Research to undertake research to evaluate the service, to gauge the viability of continuing the contract for a further 12 months.

The research sought to address the following specific objectives:

- Determine perceptions of the Yourtutor service
- Determine if the Yourtutor service meets the needs of public libraries and
   Indigenous Knowledge Centres throughout Queensland
- Determine if the Yourtutor service meets student and parent expectations
- ◆ Determine how the service could be improved

### 1.2 RESEARCH METHOD

A multi-stage research program was undertaken, focusing on two key target audiences:

- Public libraries, Country Lending Services and Indigenous Knowledge Centres throughout Queensland
- Students who have used the Yourtutor service

### 1.2.1 STUDENTS

Footprints Market Research was provided with summary data collected from students who access Yourtutor. This data was analysed to provide an overview of student perceptions of the service.



### 1.2.2 LIBRARIES THROUGHOUT QUEENSLAND

Two stages of research were conducted with Library Services:

- Exploratory phase using a series of 8 in-depth interviews with key library managers throughout Queensland.
- Measurement phase using an online survey with n=60 Independent Libraries and Country Lending Service Libraries throughout Queensland.

#### 1.3 KEY FINDINGS

### 1.3.1 Use and perceptions of Yourtutor - Students

- For the 2009 year to date to 1 April (3 months), 2,873 Queensland students used the Yourtutor Online Homework Help service. For the month of March 2009, 1,604 Queensland students used the service. This latter figure shows a significant increase in usage during March, possibly due to increased marketing efforts and word-of-mouth referrals.
- 86% of students feel that Yourtutor helps them get their work done; 87% of students state that they would recommend Yourtutor to a friend.
- On average, Yourtutor users rate the service as 3.56 on a 5-point scale. This is part way between 'good' and 'very good', and is an acceptable result.

In summary, Queensland students who have accessed the Yourtutor Online Homework Help service value the service and find it extremely useful. The service has resulted in students feeling more confident with their school work and in their own academic abilities. To have independent and safe access to qualified tutors who are non-judgemental and treat students with respect is truly valued. Students feel encouraged to do better and it appears that those who have used Yourtutor have fully embraced the service.



### 1.3.2 LIBRARY SERVICES

- For approximately two thirds of library services in Queensland (68%), Yourtutor receives minimal attention. Just 2% use the service extensively.
- 85% of library services have promoted Yourtutor to current library users.
   Promotion to the broader community is slightly lower at 68% of library services.
- 17% of Library Services have extensively promoted Yourtutor and could not realistically do more. Half of Library Services (52%) have tried to promote the service but acknowledge that they could do more. The remaining third (31%) admit to not putting a lot of time and effort into promoting Yourtutor.
- ◆ 51% of Library Services believe there is a great deal of potential for Yourtutor in their local community. This feeling is stronger amongst Independent Libraries (65%).
- 92% of Queensland Library Services agree that libraries have a role to play with homework help for students.
- 59% of Library Services agree that Yourtutor has helped to enhance the perception of the library amongst the community. 47% of Library Services feel that Yourtutor has resulted in greater awareness of the library.
- 47% of Library Services in Queensland have seen some cross-over of services, with Yourtutor users also using more of the library's services and facilities. 24% of Library Services have experienced an increase in library use since offering Yourtutor.
- Seven in ten Library Services (71%) are strongly in favour of the State Library of Queensland continuing the support of Yourtutor.

In summary, Library Services throughout Queensland hold a positive view of the Yourtutor service. The majority of Library Services believe they do have a role to play with homework help for students, and Yourtutor allows students the flexibility to obtain assistance through the library, outside of library hours.

It appears however, that the potential for Yourtutor is yet to be fully reached. This is due to:

- Perceived lack of interest amongst the community
- Lack of promotion of the service

Barriers to market Yourtutor stem from a lack of understanding amongst Library Services of the benefits to the local community, and a lack of staff resourcing to devote to promoting Yourtutor.

### 1.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on findings from the primary research conducted with Library Services throughout Queensland, and the secondary research conducted on students, it is the researcher's opinion that the State Library of Queensland should continue to offer the Yourtutor Online Homework Help service at a state-wide level.

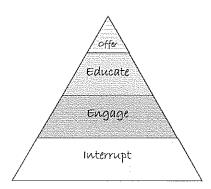
Access to this service via the State Library of Queensland allows wide distribution of the service to students who would not otherwise have access to educational support at this level.

Whilst Yourtutor has enormous potential, the value of the service and this recommendation should be considered in conjunction with the financial cost to the State Library.

To reach its full potential, the Yourtutor Online Homework Help service must be fully supported and promoted by Library Services. We suggest the following:

- Ensure that Library Managers are fully aware of the State Library's decision regarding support or otherwise of the service.
- Should support from the State Library continue, communicate results of the evaluative research to Library Managers. In particular, address barriers and misperceptions. Use this opportunity to educate Library Services of the value and relevance of Yourtutor to the community.
- Continue to support Library Services in their launch/relaunch of Yourtutor with workshops and training sessions as appropriate. Training should encompass the Yourtutor service itself and also how to promote the service. This will increase Library Managers' confidence in the service and their abilities to raise awareness of it through their local community.
- Use strong performing Library Services (in terms of Yourtutor usage) as case studies for other Library Services:
  - How to effectively promote Yourtutor (give examples of successful promotional activities such as media releases and school networking).
  - > Benefits realised as a result of the service
- ◆ Educate Library Services staff to take opportunities to promote 'Ask a Librarian' or discuss library databases when discussing Yourtutor to potential clients. This will create a stronger link between Yourtutor and online resources offered by State Library and Library Services.

 Continue to apply grass-roots marketing strategies, following the communication model shown below.



- 1. Raise awareness of Yourtutor through promotion and word of mouth.
- 2. Engage the target market by communicating a strong benefit.
- 3. Identify the important issues and how Yourtutor addresses them (i.e. one-on-one tutoring that can supplement what is taught in the classroom; individual attention from qualified tutors to help your child grasp key concepts). Address barriers (can access Yourtutor at home or in the library; not a long-term commitment i.e. service can be accessed on an ad-hoc basis).
- 4. Offer a low risk entry to the Yourtutor service (just need a library card).
- Build lasting relationships with community groups including private and public primary and highschools and P&C Associations.

### . Introduction

State Library of Queensland supports delivery of the 'Yourtutor online homework help service' made available through public libraries, Indigenous Knowledge Centres and via State Library E-Services membership. The service allows students in Years 4 to 12 to access an online tutor in all main subjects.

State Library of Queensland funds the state-wide service from the public library grant funds, with sponsorship support through QUT and CQ University.

The service has been running since July 2008. To determine whether further commitment is made beyond 30 June 2009, State Library of Queensland commissioned Footprints Market Research to undertake an evaluation of the service, to gauge the viability of continuing the contract for a further 12 months.

This document details the findings of the evaluation.

### 3. Research Objectives and Method

### 3.1 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research sought to address the following specific objectives:

- Determine perceptions of the Yourtutor service
- Determine if the Yourtutor service meets the needs of public libraries and
   Indigenous Knowledge Centres throughout Queensland
- Determine if the Yourtutor service meets student and parent expectations
- Determine how the service could be improved

In addition, findings from the research will be used to inform the State Library of the following:

- ♦ Has the Yourtutor service met its contract milestones?
- Is the service applicable to State Library objectives?
- Does Yourtutor provide value for money?

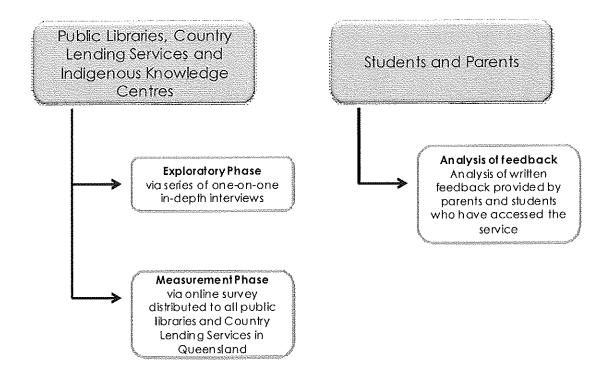
### 3.2 RESEARCH METHOD

To meet the above objectives, a multi-stage research program was undertaken. This is shown in the diagram over the page.

The research focused on two key target audiences:

- Public libraries, Country Lending Services and Indigenous Knowledge Centres throughout Queensland
- Students who have used the Yourtutor service





### 3.2.1 LIBRARIES THROUGHOUT QUEENSLAND

As shown in the diagram above, two stages of research were conducted with Public Libraries, Country Lending Services (CLS) and Indigenous Knowledge Centres (IKCs).

An exploratory phase using a series of in-depth interviews was firstly conducted. This stage involved recruiting a selection of key library managers using lists provided by the State Library of Queensland. A total of 8 interviews were conducted by telephone, as follows:

- 4 x Independent Library
- ♦ 3 x Country Lending Service
- 1 x Indigenous Knowledge Centre

The interviews were conducted on 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> April 2009. Metropolitan, regional and remote areas were included.

The Discussion Guide used in this stage of the research program is appended.

The second stage of research with this target market was quantitative in nature, and consisted of an online survey with Independent Libraries and Country Lending Service Libraries throughout Queensland.

The process was as follows:

- An email invitation was issued to 107 Independent Libraries and Country Lending Services throughout Queensland on the evening of Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2009.
- The email invited respondents to participate in the research and contained a link that directed recipients to a specially constructed website where they accessed the survey.

The confidentiality and anonymity of the respondent was assured and safeguards were in place to ensure that each person completed the survey only once.

During the fieldwork period, two gentle reminders were sent to those who had not responded. The reminders were sent on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> May and Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2009.

The survey was closed on the morning of Tuesday  $12^{th}$  May with a final sample size of n=60. This equates to an excellent response rate of 56%. Based on this sample size and the population size of N=107, data is accurate to within  $\pm$  8.4% at the 95% level of confidence.

The survey instrument used in this stage of the research is appended.

### 3.2.2 STUDENTS

A short feedback question is included in the Yourtutor service. On completion of their session with the online tutor, students are asked the following four questions:

- 1. How would you rate your learning session? (Measured on a positively biased 5-point scale of 'excellent, very good, good, fair, poor'.
- 2. Would you recommend Yourtutor to a friend? (Requires a 'yes' or 'no' response).
- 3. Is Yourtutor helping you get your work done? (Requires a 'yes' or 'no' response).
- 4. Other comments (open ended question)

Footprints Market Research was provided with summary data from these questions. Responses from the open ended question were coded and grouped into like themes, while data from the first three questions was analysed to understand perceptions of the service amongst those who have used it.

### MAIN FINDINGS

### 4.1 Use of Yourtutor

For the 2009 year to date to 1 April (3 months), 2,873 Queensland students used the Yourtutor Online Homework Help service. On average, each session lasted for just under 15 minutes (14.64 minutes), and students had to wait for just over 2 minutes for a tutor to be available (2.16 minutes).

For the month of March 2009, 1,604 Queensland students used the service. Comparing this figure with the year-to-date figure above, we see a significant increase in usage during March, possibly due to increased marketing efforts and word-of-mouth referrals.

Table 1 below details the number of sessions by library service for March 2009, in order of usage. Brisbane and Logan City Council libraries record greatest use at 24% and 13% respectively.

For more meaningful analysis, penetration rates could be calculated to ascertain the proportion of primary and high school students in each region listed who have accessed the Yourtutor service. This analysis would correct skews caused by differences in population numbers between council areas. In order to do this analysis, we need figures for 'number of students'. Data based on 'number of sessions' is not ideal for this purpose, as the data may include multiple use by one student.

Library Service	Number of Sessions	Percentage of Sessions
Brisbane City Council	392	24%
Logan City Council Libraries	207	13%
Bundaberg Regional Library Service	110	7%
Isaac Regional Council	108	7%
lpswich City Council	105	7%



Library Service	Number of Sessions	Percentage of Sessions
Redland Libraries	96	6%
Sunshine Coast Regional Library Service	87	5%
SLQ CQU Amalgamated	73	5%
Gladstone Regional Libraries	58	4%
Cairns Libraries	49	3%
Mackay Regional Council	46	3%
Rockhampton Regional Council	43	3%
Gold Coast City Council Libraries	41	3%
SLQ Amalgamated	37	2%
Gympie Regional Libraries	31	2%
Fraser Coast Libraries	27	2%
Toowoomba Regional Council	21	1%
Moreton Bay Libraries	15	1%
Townsville City Council	15	1%
Central Highlands Regional Council	15	1%
Burdekin Library	6	0.4%
Cassowary Coast Regional Council	. 5	0.3%
Hinchinbrook Shire Library	4	0.2%
Lockyer Valley Libraries	4	0.2%
South Burnett Regional Council	4	0.2%
Whitsunday Regional Council	4	0.2%
Charters Towers Excelsior Library	1	-

Table 1

### 4.2 GRADE LEVEL SERVICED

As shown in Figure 1, usage of the service increases with the year level of the student. Eight in ten students who access the service (82%) are in high school, and half of these are in Grade 11 or Grade 12. The remaining 18% of Yourtutor users are in primary school, between Grade 4 and Grade 7. Just 1% of usage comes from TAFE students.

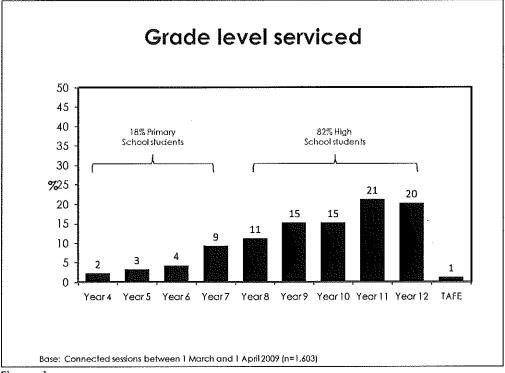


Figure 1

### 4.3 SUBJECT AREA

Figure 2 below shows that half of students who access Yourtutor seek help in maths. This 50% is made up of:

•	Maths (Year 4-6)	5%
•	Maths (Year 7-10)	24%
•	Maths – General	3%
•	Maths – Intermediate	10%
•	Maths – Specialist/ Extension	8%

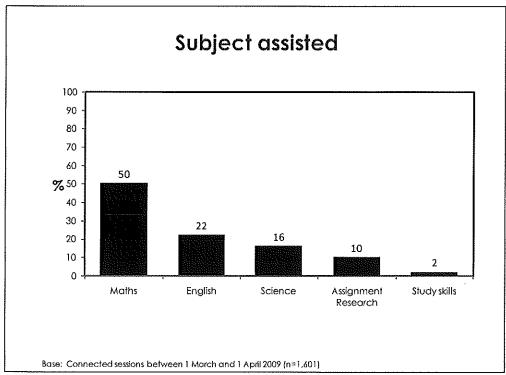


Figure 2

English is the next most popular subject area requiring help, at 22%. This is fairly evenly split between essay writing (10%) and general English (12%).

Sixteen percent (16%) of Yourtutor users need help in the subject area of science. These are mostly students in Grade 7 through to Grade 10 (7%). The breakdown for science is as follows:

•	Science (Year 4-6)	1%
•	Science (Year 7-10)	7%
•	Science – Biology	1%
•	Science – Chemistry	4%
•	Science – General	0.4%
•	Science – Physics	3%

### 4.4 Assistance and likely recommendation

Since inception of the Queensland Yourtutor program on 1 July 2008, 3,253 online feedback responses have been received from students who have accessed the Yourtutor service.

Just fewer than 9 in every 10 students (86%) feel that Yourtutor helps them get their work done; an excellent response.

Word of mouth endorsement is strong, with 87% of students stating that they would recommend Yourtutor to a friend. This is a very good source of referral for the service. A lower level of endorsement is seen in the Whitsunday Regional Council area, with just 58% of Yourtutor users stating that they would refer the service. Similarly, slightly fewer students in this council area feel that Yourtutor helps them get their work done (79%). Further research into the service provided in the Whitsunday Regional Council area is required to better understand these results.

Excluding Whitsunday Regional Council, levels of endorsement range from 72% for those accessing the service through Redland Libraries, up to 100% for Burdekin Library, Central Highlands Regional Council, South Burnett Regional Council, Southern Downs Regional Council, CQ University and Scenic Rim Regional Council (although the latter two are from just one session each).



The above findings are consistent with more recent data from the past 4 months, up to 30 April 2009.

### 4.5 Performance of Yourtutor

Students are asked to rate performance of the Yourtutor service on a five point scale of:

- ◆ Excellent
- Very good
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

This scale is positively biased to provide greater sensitivity at the upper end of the scale. When analysing this type of data, we generally report 'top two box' scores; that is the sum of 'excellent' and 'very good'. Ratings of 'good' are typically considered as average results.

In this instance however, the raw data was not available for analysis. We therefore report mean (average) ratings.

On average, Yourtutor users rate the service as 3.56 on a 5-point scale. This is part way between 'good' and 'very good', and is an acceptable result. Performance is stronger in the South Burnett Regional Council area (4.69) and the Burdekin Library (4.23).

Again, these findings are consistent with more recent data from the past 4 months, up to 30 April 2009.

Whilst the above evaluation provides a glimpse into perceptions of the Yourtutor service from the point of view of users, a more comprehensive evaluation with a representative sample of students would be required to better understand usage of the service and the ratings, and how these can be improved.

### 4.6 PERCEPTIONS OF YOURTUTOR

Students accessing the service are asked to provide comments. These comments are collected verbatim. Comments given in March 2009 have been coded into themes and detailed in Table 2 below.

Mostly students feel Yourtutor helps them to get their work done, or helps them understand a problem or concept that they could not grasp in class. One quarter of students simply state that the service is 'fantastic', 'awesome' or 'great'. Sixteen percent (16%) of students say that the tutors are clear in their explanations, allowing them to finally 'get it'.

"Thank you. I now understand my homework."

Year 9 student

Just over 1 in 10 students (12%) specifically mention a tutor by name, which suggests that a respectful bond is being created during the sessions. They like that their tutor treats them with respect, and go on to describe them as kind, friendly, patient and polite.

"I think my tutor was very nice to me and caring."

Year 4 student

Student comment	Proportion (n=322)
Helped me/ helped me get my work done/ helpful	41%
Great/ fantastic/ awesome/ fun/ cool	26%
Explained well/ easy to understand	16%
Tutors are nice/ kind/ friendly/ polite/ patient	12%
Great learning tool/ great service	8%
Thank you (no further comment)	8%
Suggestions given (see list below)	3%
Easy to access when no other help available (i.e. parents busy)	1%
Other	2%

Table 2



"He really helped. He didn't even get annoyed if he had to explain the question over and over again!!!"

Year 8 student

"This tutor was the best physics tutor I have had so far."

Year 12 student

"Thank you so much for all your help, this is absolutely wonderful! I've learnt so much, keep up the awesome work."

Year 11 student

"This is the best thing ever invented."

Year 12 student

"Yourtutor has helped me a lot because last year I got a D for my English but I used Yourtutor this year and I got an A on my English."

Year 9 student

"This is a cool way of getting our homework done, especially when our parents are busy."

Year 8 student

As shown in Table 2, 3% of comments given are suggestions from students. These include:

- Instructions on how to use the drawing pad
- Being able to print a record of all the conversation details
- Being able to ask the tutor more than one question at a time
- Having a sound to let the student know when the tutor has replied
- Spell check
- Quicker connection time



## 5. LIBRARY SERVICES

### 5.1 SAMPLE FRAME

Before looking at the findings from Library Services throughout Queensland, it is important to understand the sample frame; that is who responded to the survey.

In total, 60 library services took part in the study. This represents 56% of library services throughout Queensland (who were asked to participate) and is a very good response rate.

As shown in Figure 3, 42% are Independent Libraries; 58% Country Lending Service Libraries. Indigenous Knowledge Centres (IKC) were excluded from this phase of the research, as the Yourtutor service is very new, and in many cases unknown to remote communities. The State Library of Queensland felt an online survey with IKCs at this point would not be advantageous.

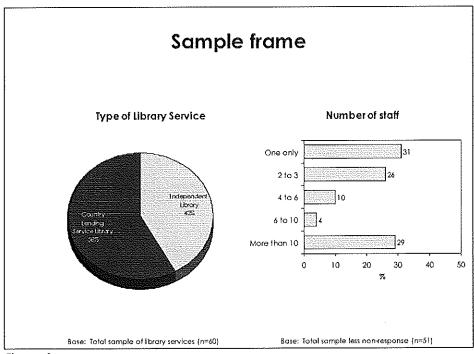


Figure 3

One in five Library Services (22%) in the sample subscribed to Yourtutor prior to July 2008, when the State Library commenced support of the service. This equates to 13 of the 60 Library Services.

### 5.2 USE OF YOURTUTOR

For approximately two thirds of library services in Queensland (68%), Yourtutor receives minimal attention. Just 2% (1 library service) use the service extensively. This is an Independent Library with more than 10 staff.

Library services reporting minimal usage of Yourtutor are more likely to be Country Lending Service Libraries (83%).

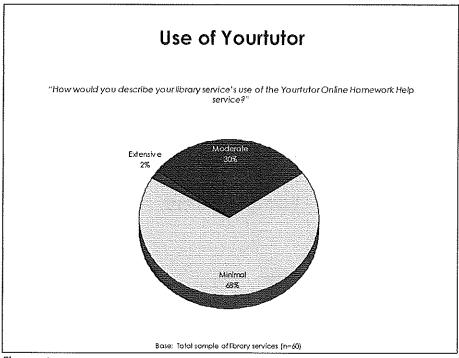


Figure 4

Lack of utilisation of the Yourtutor Online Homework Help service stems from two key reasons:

- Perceived lack of interest amongst the community
- Lack of promotion of the service

In terms of the latter, lack of promotion of the service is due to a lack of understanding of the benefits of the service to the local community, and a lack of staff resourcing to devote to marketing Yourtutor.

"At this stage it is not being fully utilised. I would say we have very modest use at the moment because it has not been fully promoted. I am conscious of that but we have had staffing issues."

Country Lending Service Library

"It is lack of understanding, and because there are so many branches, I can only get to so many in a week. I rely on that library manager to push it and if they are only going to leave a brochure around and hope someone finds it, it won't happen."

Independent Library

"We have a very limited borrower base, mainly elderly people like 55+. We have a few junior borrowers up until grade 7 and then everyone goes away to boarding school. We don't have the people to use it. We don't see school children doing their homework here. Most of the children that come into our school go to the hostel where they board during the week.

So hostel parents do their homework with them."

Country Lending Service Library

As shown in Table 3, other reasons given for the Yourtutor Online Homework Help service not being fully utilised include a lack of understanding and awareness of the service within the library service itself.

Why is the Yourtutor service not fully utilised by your library service?	% (n=53)
Lack of marketing/ promotion efforts	26%
Perceived lack of community interest	25%
Just started advertising/ promoting it	21%
Lack of awareness/understanding of service by library managers and staff	11%
People access it elsewhere at school or at home	8%
Doesn't fit with library opening hours	6%
Don't believe it is the role of public libraries to offer such a service	6%
Restrictions as to number of students able to access it at once/ wait times	4%
Don't have it	2%
Other	8%

Table 3



A few library services (6%) feel that an online homework help service is not part of their mandate, and are therefore not willing to devote time to the promotion of such a service.

"I also wonder about public libraries' roles: would it be more appropriate to sponsor/provide an information literacy focussed online chat service, rather than a homework help service? When customers come to the library website, are they looking for the kind of homework help a tutor supplies, or the type of help finding information that it is more appropriate for a librarian to provide?

Independent Library

"I'm a registered teacher as well as a Librarian with many years experience. I help students with topic analysis and resource advice. Beyond that my advice is to go back to the teacher. I am confident that this is the best advice to give. There is no resource quite like the teacher who probably even knows the student and where he or she is at. I don't think Yourtutor fits comfortably with the role of a public library."

Independent Library

Some of the other comments shown in Table 3 may be a result of misinformation surrounding the operation of the Yourtutor service through the State Library. For instance, 14% of library services state they do not fully utilise Yourtutor because students access the service from home or because the service is only available outside of library opening hours.

Finally, as shown in the comment below, some library services may have been a little cautious in their marketing efforts with the uncertainty of the service offering continuing in the future.

"With the uncertainty as to whether this will be a continuous service or not, it makes it hard to justify the allocation of funds to promote this great product."

Independent Library



### 5.3 Promotion of Yourtutor

The majority of library services (85%) state they have promoted Yourtutor to current library users. This is higher amongst Independent Libraries at 91%. Promotion to the broader community is slightly lower at 68% of library services.

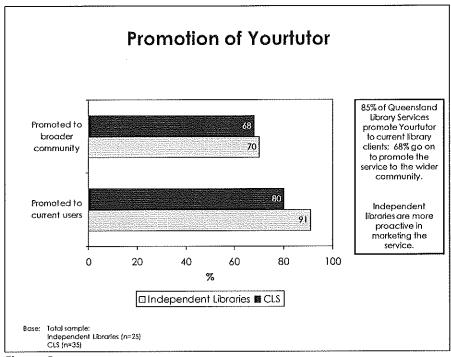


Figure 5

In terms of promoting the service to **current library members**, verbally informing library visitors is the approach most often taken (used by 80% of library services that promote Yourtutor to current library users), as shown in Figure 6.

Many library services appreciate the promotional tools provided by Yourtutor, especially the posters and brochures. These are often displayed at the library, most commonly in the entrance area or in and around the children's area.

"We mainly use the stuff that is coming from Yourtutor. Posters are good because they are colourful. We can put them up in the children's area. They are probably the best ones."

Country Lending Service Library

"We were given a pack of information and from there if any requests came through from the schools we answered any questions. A few parents have come into the library and taken small things like a pen or coaster or leaflet and promotional material. We haven't promoted it as a library ourselves apart from having literature here."

Country Lending Service Library

"We print out the little cards and that is what we give the parents. There are some that are laminated and taped to desks where the students sit in the library."

Independent Library

Library newsletters are used by 3 in 10 Library Services who promote Yourtutor to current clients, while blogs are used by 8%.

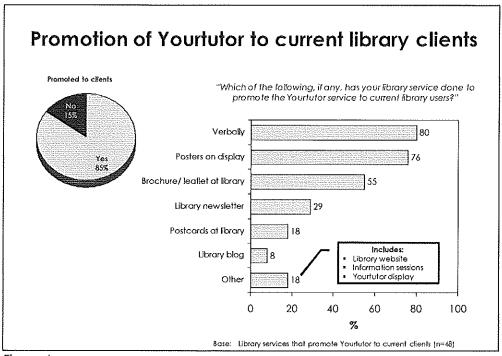


Figure 6

In terms of promoting the Yourtutor service to the **broader community**, approximately two thirds of Library Services (68%) are proactive this way. Mostly they try to create and build relationships with the school community. If this succeeds, the Library Sevice can place articles in school newsletters, speak at P&C meetings, visit schools and work with Teacher Librarians to promote Yourtutor.

"School visits and school newsletters. Last week we spoke to 600 kids and this week we will be speaking to another 600 kids."

Independent Library

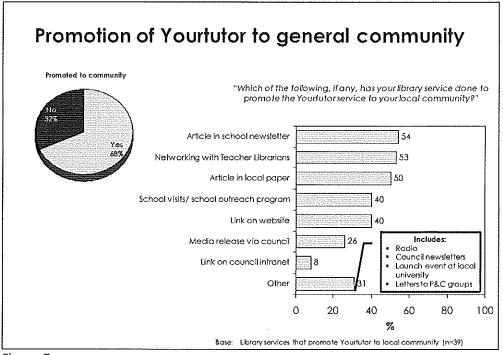


Figure 7

Placing an ad in the local paper has also been a successful media strategy, although this appears to work best for Library Services located in urban areas.

"I think it has increased because of the advertising in the local paper, media releases and photos. Also a weekly small advertisement in a council column for 4 weeks bumped it up quickly."

Independent Library

"I put an ad in the shire newspaper about it. I worded it myself and explained that it was no cost to them. All they had to do was look into it. We got no response. Mostly the people here are grazing families."

Country Lending, Service Library

For some Library Services, promotion of Yourtutor has become a natural part of their library life. They promote the service alongside other services offered by the library, particularly online services such as access to databases. This appears to be the most effective way of not only building awareness of the Yourtutor service, but also building awareness of other library services.

"When we go to the schools we promote that product. The schools love it. We offer online tutorial courses on the databases and Yourtutor is one of them that we sell."

Independent Library

### 5.4 BARRIERS TO PROMOTION OF YOURTUTOR

Seventeen percent (17%) of Library Services feel they have extensively promoted Yourtutor and could not realistically do more. Half of Library Services (52%) have tried to promote the service but acknowledge that they could do more. The remaining third (31%) admit to not putting a lot of time and effort into promoting Yourtutor.

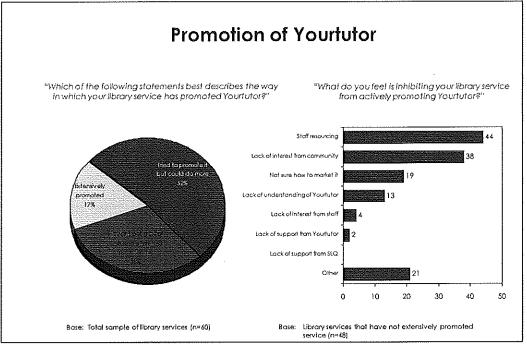


Figure 8

As shown in the graph above, barriers to active promotion of the Yourtutor service are mainly a lack of staff resourcing (44%) and a perceived lack of interest from the community (38%). Country Lending Service libraries are more likely to feel their community would not be interested in this service (83%).

"I probably don't mention it every single time because of staffing time. I am not getting time
to work through it with people."

Country Lending Service Library

"You speak to people and if they don't show an interest. People here seem to have resistance to the library."

Country Lending Service Library

Of particular interest is 1 in 5 Library Services (19%) are unsure how to market the service. This suggests that further guidance from both Yourtutor and the State Library of Queensland is required.

Successful promotion of a service requires three things:

- An understanding of the service itself and the benefits it can bring to end users
- Time and effort on behalf of the Library Service
- A desire to make the service a success

The latter will come from an understanding of the benefits this service can bring to both Queensland libraries and the communities in which they operate. Whilst perceptions of the Yourtutor service are extremely positive from the majority of Library Services, at this stage it appears that not all Library Services fully understand why the State Library is offering this service and how it can benefit libraries throughout the state. Once all Library Services fully believe in the service, promotion should prove to be less onerous.



### 5.5 POTENTIAL FOR UPTAKE OF YOURTUTOR

Half of Library Services believe there is a great deal of potential for Yourtutor in their local community. This feeling is stronger amongst Independent Libraries (65%).

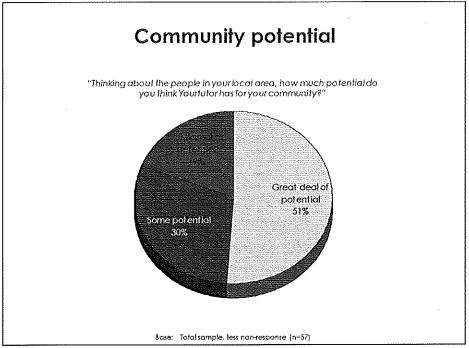


Figure 9

These Library Services feel that Yourtutor fills a need in the community, particularly for disadvantaged areas and areas of lower socio-economic status. The service offers residents access to qualified tutors, in a comfortable and respectful way. Typically this is something that only a small proportion of the population has access to due to the expense involved in sourcing tutoring privately.

"Because we are a rural area with moderate literacy problems and lower income families, so private tutors cannot be considered. Also the majority of our school students travel long distances by bus to school so arrive at school just in time for school to start and have to leave immediately school finishes. These children can't get after school help. Once confident with Yourtutor I feel a large number of these students will make use of it from home."

Country Lending Service Library

"I see it as another bridge for those with disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds, to help even out the difference for those who have a private education vs. a public education."

### Independent Library

Further, with many parents unable to help children with homework, Yourtutor is seen as a valuable surrogate aid.

"This is a mostly an Indigenous populated town and there are some parents that can't read or write so there would be students out there who are probably struggling with homework as well but don't have the parents help, so Yourtutor would be fantastic for them to use."

Country Lending Service Library

"Because a lot of parents are working until after 5pm and the students need to get their work done as soon as they get home, and the help is on the net."

Country Lending Service Library

One in five Library Services feels that there is minimal potential for Yourtutor. These are mostly Country Lending Service Libraries (29%). They feel that their community does not fit the 'typical' profile of a community who would use the service. In other words, they state that there are no high school children in their area, or that the students tend to board at school.

In the case of the Indigenous Knowledge Centre included in the qualitative component of the study, many Indigenous students are resistant to any outside help with studies, and even refuse to accept help from the long-term Library Manager who runs a homework club for the students. This manager feels there are two reasons for the resistance:

- Indigenous children have been raised to be sceptical and mistrusting of Caucasians;
- Low self-esteem in their abilities



"If it is an online thing, they would have to be competent and fluent enough to be able to write the questions in and understand the answers."

Indigenous Knowledge Centre

Further, comments made from some Independent Libraries and Country Lending Service libraries suggest a misperception that students can only access the service from the library itself.

"We are only open very, very occasionally and there is not the clientele out here."

Country Lending Service Library

"Children can only use the library one afternoon per week."

Country Lending Service Library

### 5.6 BARRIERS TO UPTAKE AMONGST COMMUNITY

Library Services were asked to think about possible barriers to uptake of the Yourtutor service amongst their local community. The most obvious barrier, as shown in Table 4, is simply a lack of awareness amongst residents, which stems from a lack of promotion and marketing of the service.

"The barriers are that they don't know about it, and we need to have questions answered about capacity before we promote it."

Independent Library

"Parents not really taking the time to see the benefits. The students who did use the programme found it great, as did the parents. Now we have had a workshop on how it does work and a teacher is going to show the parents, so I am looking for a great deal of usage."

Country Lending Service Library



	Total sample (n=50) %	Independent Libraries (n=20) %	CLS (n=30) %
Lack of promotion of service	34%	45%	27%
Lack of internet access at home	20%	30%	13%
Lack of interest/ understanding	18%	10%	23%
Limited access times/ no weekend access	12%	20%	7%
Small community	8%	10%	7%
Staff levels at libraries	6%	-	10%
Computers at home so libraries are not being asked to help	4%	5%	3%
Availability of library facilities	2%	-	3%
Not considered role of library which leads to a lack of promotional effort	2%	5%	_
Other	10%	15%	7%
Don't know	6%	-	10%

Table 4

The next most significant perceived barrier to uptake amongst the general community is a lack of internet access at home. This only becomes important if the Yourtutor service continues to be offered at times that are not in sync with library opening hours.

"Lack of decent internet broadband connection; a large number of families without internet access; lack of knowledge or fear of using online databases."

Independent Library

"Lack of internet connection at home, especially broadband. It would be good if it could be offered on weekends as well."

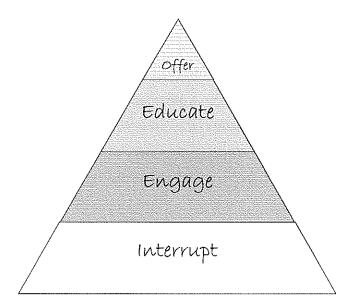
Independent Library



Perhaps most importantly, 18% of library services believe that there is a lack of interest in and understanding of Yourtutor. This barrier could be addressed through successful marketing of the product.

### 5.7 OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO UPTAKE

Applying these findings to the model of communication shown below, we must first **obtain the attention** of current library users, parents, students and teachers in the broad community (we must interrupt their thinking).



With awareness, we must then **generate interest** of the Yourtutor service. The most effective way of achieving this is to communicate a strong benefit to the end user and parents; answer the question 'what's in it for me?'

Educating the target audience is something that some Library Services appear to be doing well with Yourtutor. This step involves forging relationships with local key influencers (teachers, principals, parents etc.) and **providing information** about the service that is useful and relevant. These influencers should then become a credible source of referral for Yourtutor.

Finally, the last step is the offer. **Making it easy** for parents and students to access the Yourtutor service is key. This is Yourtutor's greatest strength – a free service (thanks to the State Library of Queensland) available throughout Queensland.



One particular Library Service who has successfully been promoting Yourtutor to their local community feels strongly that it is up to the library to make it easy for potential users to access Yourtutor.

"When we go to the schools and tell them about it they have to join up. We give them the forms for our library to join up and then we take them back to the schools. We make it so easy for them; they don't have to visit the library."

Independent Library

### To summarise:

- 1. Raise awareness of Yourtutor through promotion and word of mouth.
- 2. Engage the target market by communicating a strong benefit
- Identify the important issues and how Yourtutor addresses them (i.e. oneon-one tutoring that can supplement what is taught in the classroom; individual attention from qualified tutors to help your child grasp key concepts)
- 4. Offer a low risk entry to the Yourtutor service (just need a library card)

"I think that the major barrier to the take-up of this service is that parents are not familiar with it and therefore do not encourage their children to turn to this service when they have a problem. We have also had feedback that more students would be able to use this service if it was made available over the weekend as they too busy during the week to apparently find the time."



### 5.8 ATTITUDES TOWARDS YOURTUTOR

When first introduced to the Yourtutor Online Homework Help service, Library Managers were excited at the potential of the service for their community and impressed with the product offering.

"I was excited. Being a smaller rural community we get a lot of students coming here, predominantly primary school, looking for help with assignments."

Country Lending Service Library

"I thought it was interesting and I thought it had potential. When we are helping people at the reference desk we often get school questions. We don't really know how to help students if they need help with how to approach an assignment. We can't help with maths or chemistry either."

Independent Library

"Overall it is a good service. Not only does it provide expert tuition, I like the style they adopt.

'Did you actually understand the question?'"

Independent Library

Like anything new however, the service needs momentum in order to be successful. For those Library Services who have embraced it, this momentum appears to have eventuated after visits from Yourtutor and an SLQ conference, where they learnt more about the service.

For successful promotion of the service, Library Managers must feel confident within themselves that:

- a) They understand how the service works
- b) The delivery of the service via the State Library is consistent
- c) They know how to address concerns or answer questions (or at least know where to direct the customer)



Library Services receive formal feedback from State Library of Queensland which shows usage of the service, and this is appreciated. In addition, feedback has been gained at a more micro level from parents and students who have accessed the service. This serves to encourage Library Managers to continue promoting the service.

"People like it. We do get comments from Yourtutor and they send one for each library. I don't know if they are from our students or if they are generic. They are always positive comments."

Independent Library

"They are all promoting it much better this year. They have got bookmarks and they give them to the mums. We do school visits and write about it in the newsletter. And the fact that they don't have to be at school to access it, they love it. Those mums are selling the product as well through word of mouth. I do like the free pens the Yourtutor people give out."

Independent Library

Some Library Services comment on the fact that apart from the effort required in promoting the service, Yourtutor is a product that requires minimal ongoing attention and maintenance. With a heavy workload, this is definitely an advantage.

"I think it is great. It has just been wonderful. It just works; we don't have to worry about it at all."



### 5.9 ADVANTAGE OF YOURTUTOR FOR LIBRARY SERVICES

Library Managers were asked whether they agree or disagree with a series of statements about Yourtutor. As shown in Figure 10, 92% agree that the Library Service does have a role to play with homework help for students.

"I think it suits libraries. They are all about information. Where else is it going to be offered? The library is the basic community hub where it is equity of access for everyone and that is what we are about. From a library, people can feel that there are no hidden agendas or biases."

Independent Library

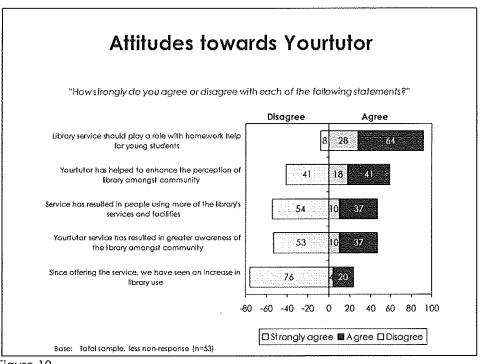


Figure 10

In terms of flow-on affects for Library Services, these tend to be around enhanced perceptions and awareness of the library. Approximately 3 in 5 Library Services (59%) agree that Yourtutor has helped to enhance the perception of the library amongst the community. Those who do not believe this to be the case report minimal usage of Yourtutor. Similarly just under half (47%) feel that Yourtutor has resulted in greater awareness of the library.

Further, 47% of Library Services in Queensland have seen some cross-over of services, with Yourtutor users also using more of the library's services and facilities.

"I know one particular lady who had some positive feedback and I know that she has now been using the SLQ website more and searching for books more."

Country Lending Service Library

It is also pleasing to see that one quarter (24%) of Library Services have experienced an increase in library use since offering Yourtutor. This is an excellent result.

"After we run promos we always get follow-up calls. I think the effect has been positive because once they use Yourtutor generally we are also telling them about other resources they can use here."

Independent Library

Having said this, there are a small group of Library Services who doubt the relevance of Yourtutor to Library Services, as shown in the following comment:

"The students that do use it are pretty happy with it. Possibly it is a good PR generator for the library. It is a needed service - but are libraries the ones to fund it? Or should it be an education sector initiative, given that it's about tutoring, not access to information or information literacy skills. But, it also misses some potential benefits: it has the potential to help with promotion of subscription online resources, but it doesn't do that, because customers aren't referred to online resources. It has the potential to build information literacy skills, but I'm not sure it does that, because it's run by tutors, not librarians. It has the potential to give customers a positive experience of interacting with the library / a librarian, but I suspect students disassociate the service from the library, because it is so heavily branded and so tutoring focussed."



Stated benefits are shown in Table 5 below.

"What benefits does the Yourlutor Online Homework Help Service bring to your library service?	% (n=50)
Assists children/ builds rapport with the youth	28%
Promotes knowledge of library services/ good PR for library	26%
Promote new membership	18%
Fits in with other programs offered/ expands on services offered	8%
Helps libraries to offer free services to all	6%
Greater knowledge base for staff and the community	2%
Other	2%
None/ don't know	24%

Table 5

"This service allows us to refer students to "subject specialists" to help them with some of the in-depth queries that we receive. It is great because Your Tutor gives students one-on-one access to a tutor. At the library information desk in the afternoons there is always a line up and it is hard to give students undivided attention."

Independent Library

"We have had an increase of families joining the library which has had flow on for them using our facilities and services. Our relationships with local schools have improved and we have had the opportunity to become more pro-active within the school environment.

Independent Library

"It assists with our ability to provide diverse methods of homework help for our clients. It raises the profile of the library within the school-age community."

Independent Library

"Extra drawcard for youth to utilise our website. Yourtutor helps create the perception of an up to date library service."



### 5.10 SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS

Respondents were asked to suggest ways in which the Yourtutor Online Homework Help service could be improved. Extending the operating hours is most often mentioned, at 31%. Mostly Library Services call for weekend operation and hours beyond 8pm.

"How could Yourlutor be improved?	% (n=45)
More flexible hours	31%
Nothing – happy as it is	18%
More promotion/ marketing	11%
Faster access	2%
Better staffing levels at library	2%
Simultaneous access	2%
Better training of Yourtutor	2%
Don'f know	20%

Table 6

"Promotion. I think that further promotion by offering information nights to parents and teachers about the benefits of using the service would go a long way to increasing the use of the service. If a "Yourtutor Expert" made a commitment to visit the library and do a demonstration at the beginning of the year or each term, I think that this would give parents and students the opportunity to see the product for themselves. The library could promote the "Yourtutor Event" to the community."

Other suggestions involve creating a stronger link between Library Services and Yourtutor, and educating the tutors about the services and facilities offered by Library Services. In this way, a greater cross-over of services can be achieved.

"This is supplied by SLQ. They also make available a wide range of online databases. It would be useful if the tutors were aware of the databases. In the sense that if a student has a science assignment, they can also say 'did you know that SLQ has these databases?' It doesn't make sense to promote that separately when you are appealing to the same audience."

Independent Library

"The service would be improved if the tutors knew what library the students belonged to and were able to refer the student back to that library's collections - both physical and online - for information."

### 5.11 THE WAY FORWARD

Library Services were asked if State Library of Queensland should continue to support the Yourtutor Online Homework Help Service as a state-wide program. Seven in ten Library Services (71%) are strongly in favour of SLQ continuing the support.

"I think they should support it. I think it has got untapped potential at the moment. I see it as an extension of the services provided by the State Library. I see it as a good thing. Probably for rural and remote areas it is a good way of doing it."

Country Lending Service Library

"They definitely should support it. I think it is community enhancement. It may be altruistic, but I think it is definitely something that should be available. How else are students supposed to do things? Queensland is a huge area and they can't all get to the State Library."

Independent Library

Just 4% (2 Library Services) feel that Yourtutor should not be supported by the State Library of Queensland. They are both Independent Libraries, and both of the opinion that Yourtutor does not fit with the library's core offer of information resources.

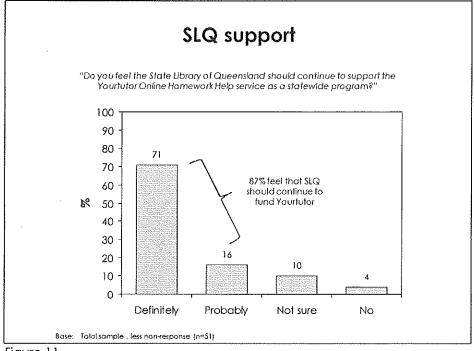


Figure 11

# 6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 6.1 PERCEPTIONS OF YOURTUTOR

Queensland students who have accessed the Yourtutor Online Homework Help service value the service and find it extremely useful. The service has resulted in students feeling more confident with their school work and in their own academic abilities. To have independent and safe access to qualified tutors who are non-judgemental and treat students with respect is truly valued. Students feel encouraged to do better and it appears that those who have used Yourtutor have fully embraced the service.

Library Services throughout Queensland also hold a positive view of the Yourtutor service. The majority of Library Services believe they do have a role to play with homework help for students, and Yourtutor allows students the flexibility to obtain assistance through the library, outside of library hours.

# 6.2 OUTCOMES AS A RESULT OF YOURTUTOR

Many positive outcomes have been realised for Library Services throughout Queensland, as a result of the Yourtutor Online Homework Help service. For example, 59% of Library Services believe that Yourtutor has helped to enhance the perception of their library service amongst the general community, while 47% believe that the Yourtutor service has resulted in greater awareness of libraries amongst the community. In terms of usage outcomes, just under half of Library Services (46%), have seen an increase in library services and facilities being used as a result of Yourtutor.

Importantly, Yourtutor allows the public to recognise a connection between the State Library of Queensland and public libraries.



### 6.3 USAGE OF YOURTUTOR

Based on feedback from Library Services throughout Queensland, it appears that the potential for Yourtutor is yet to be fully reached. Approximately 7 in 10 Library Services (68%) report minimal usage. This is due to:

- Perceived lack of interest amongst the community
- Lack of promotion of the service

Barriers to market Yourtutor stem from a lack of understanding amongst Library Services of the benefits to the local community, and a lack of staff resourcing to devote to promoting Yourtutor.

To date, promotion of the service has mostly occurred internally with current library users. Just 17% of Library Services have extensively promoted Yourtutor. There is therefore scope amongst the remaining 83% of Library Services to 'ramp up' efforts to market the service, both with current library members and with the greater community. Those who have put effort into promoting the service to date report higher levels of usage of Yourtutor.

### 6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Based on findings from the primary research conducted with Library Services throughout Queensland, and the secondary research conducted on students, it is the researcher's opinion that the State Library of Queensland should continue to offer the Yourtutor Online Homework Help service at a state-wide level.

Access to this service via the State Library of Queensland allows wide distribution of the service to students who would not otherwise have access to educational support at this level.

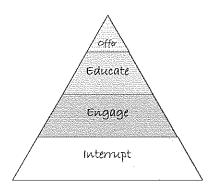
Whilst Yourtutor has enormous potential, the value of the service and this recommendation should be considered in conjunction with the financial cost to the State Library.



To reach its full potential, the Yourtutor Online Homework Help service must be fully supported and promoted by Library Services. We suggest the following:

- Ensure that Library Managers are fully aware of the State Library's decision regarding support or otherwise of the service.
- Should support from the State Library continue, communicate results of the evaluative research to Library Managers. In particular, address barriers and misperceptions. Use this opportunity to educate Library Services of the value and relevance of Yourtutor to the community.
- Continue to support Library Services in their launch/relaunch of Yourtutor with workshops and training sessions as appropriate. Training should encompass the Yourtutor service itself and also how to promote the service. This will increase Library Managers' confidence in the service and their abilities to raise awareness of it through their local community.
- Use strong performing Library Services (in terms of Yourtutor usage) as case studies for other Library Services:
  - > How to effectively promote Yourtutor (give examples of successful promotional activities such as media releases and school networking).
  - > Benefits realised as a result of the service
- ♦ Educate Library Services staff to take opportunities to promote 'Ask a Librarian' or discuss library databases when discussing Yourtutor to potential clients. This will create a stronger link between Yourtutor and online resources offered by State Library and Library Services.

◆ Continue to apply grass-roots marketing strategies, following the communication model shown below.



- 5. Raise awareness of Yourtutor through promotion and word of mouth.
- 6. Engage the target market by communicating a strong benefit.
- 7. Identify the important issues and how Yourtutor addresses them (i.e. one-on-one tutoring that can supplement what is taught in the classroom; individual attention from qualified tutors to help your child grasp key concepts). Address barriers (can access Yourtutor at home or in the library; not a long-term commitment i.e. service can be accessed on an ad-hoc basis).
- 8. Offer a low risk entry to the Yourtutor service (just need a library card).
- Build lasting relationships with community groups including private and public primary and highschools and P&C Associations.

# APPENDIX DISCUSSION GUIDE AND QUESTIONNAIRE

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# YOURTUTOR ONLINE HOMEWORK HELP SERVICE FINAL DISCUSSION GUIDE – 28 APRIL 2009

# 1.0 Introduction

- Explain purpose of research to evaluate the Yourtutor Online Homework
   Help Service.
- Explain process open and honest evaluation; confidential and anonymous.

# 2.0 Participant background

- Type of library service (Independent library/ Indigenous Knowledge Centre/ Country Lending Service)
- Location
- Participant's role and length of service

# 3.0 Yourtutor – Initial perceptions and use

- Tell me about Yourtutor:
  - > What were your initial impressions of the service?
  - How were these impressions formed?
  - Has your view changed over time? Why/ why not?
- How does your library service use Yourtutor:
  - How is it marketed/ how do parents and students become aware of the service?
  - ➤ Did you use any of the support services available from Yourtutor? IF YES, which ones? Were they useful? Why/ why not?
  - How would you describe the level of interest amongst your clients?
- Have you had any feedback from parents or students? Tell me about that.



# 4.0 Yourtutor – detailed evaluation

- As a public library/ IKC/ Country lending service library, do you feel Yourtutor has met your needs? Why/ why not?
- Has Yourtutor had any flow-on effects for your library/ knowledge centre? PROBE FULLY:
  - > Enhanced community perceptions?
  - Greater local presence?
  - Greater use of facility (i.e. people using library who wouldn't normally do so/people using the library in more ways)
  - Anything else?

# 5.0 The way forward

- In your view, do you think Library Managers/ Knowledge Centre Managers have fully embraced Yourtutor? Why/ why not?
- What do you think could be changed or done to improve the Yourtutor service in the future? PROBE FULLY.
- Finally, do you feel Yourtutor is something that the State Library should continue to support as a statewide program? Why/ why not?

THANK AND END



# FINAL QUESTIONNAIRE STATE LIBRARY OF QUEENSLAND YOURTUTOR EVALUATION 1/05/09

Ql	Which of the following best describes your library service?	
	Independent Library	l
	Country Lending Service (CLS) Library	2
Q2	How would you describe your library service's use of the Yourtutor Online Help Service?	e Homework
	Extensive	1
	Moderate	2
	Minimal	3
Q3	IF Q2 = CODE 2 OR CODE 3 Why is the Yourtutor service not fully utilised by your library service?	
Q4	Which of the following statements best describes the way in which service has promoted Yourtutor?	your library
	We have extensively promoted Yourtutor and could not realistically do any more	GO TO Q6
	We have tried to promote Yourtutor but could probably do 2	
	more	
	We haven't put a lot of time and effort into promoting 3 Yourtutor	
Q5	IF Q4 = CODE 2 OR CODE 3 (COULD DO MORE TO PROMOTE SERVICE) What do you feel is inhibiting your library service from actively promoting ROTATE.	g Yourtutor?
	Staff resourcing	1
	Lack of interest from library staff	2
	Lack of interest from community	3
	Lack of support from SLQ	4
	Lack of support from Yourtutor	5
	Not sure how to go about marketing the service	6
	Lack of understanding of the Yourtutor service	7
	Something else (please specify)	8

Q6	Has your library service promoted Yourtutor to current library users in any way?			
	Yes 1 No 2	GO TO Q8		
Q7	IF Q6 = CODE 1 (PROMOTED TO CURRENT LIBRARY USERS) Which of the following, if any, has your library service done to promote the Yourtutor service to current library users?			
	Brochure or leaflet available at the library Postcards at the library Posters displayed at the library Verbally telling library users about Yourtutor Library newsletter Library blog Other way (please specify)	1 2 3 4 5 6 7		
Q8	Has your library service promoted Yourtutor to the broader community in any way?			
	Yes 1 No 2	GO TO Q10		
Q9	IF Q8 = CODE 1 (PROMOTED TO GENERAL COMMUNITY) Which of the following, if any, has your library service done to promote service to your local community?	the Yourtutor		
	Article in school newsletter Article in local paper Media release via the council Link on website Link on council intranet School visits/ school outreach programs Networking with Teacher Librarians at schools Other way (please specify)	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8		
Q10	Thinking about the people in your local area, how much potential Yourtutor has for your community?  Great deal of potential Some potential Minimal potential	do you think  1 2 3		
QII	Why do you say that?			
Q12	What do you feel are the barriers to uptake of the Yourtutor service of local community?	amongst your		

Q13	What benefits, if any, does the Yourtutor Online Homework Help Service bring to your library service?			
Q14	How strongly do you agree or disagree with each ROTATE.	of the fol	lowing sto	atements?
		Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree
	<ul> <li>a) The Yourtutor service has resulted in greater awareness of our library amongst the general community</li> </ul>	1	2	3
	b) Since offering Yourtutor, we have seen an increase in use of the library	1	2	3
	c) The Yourtutor service has resulted in people using more of the library's services and facilities	1	2	3
	d) The library service should play a role with homework help for young students	1	2	3
	e) The Yourtutor service has helped to enhance the perception of our library service amongst the general community	1	2	3
Q15	How could the Yourtutor Online Homework Help service	e be impro	ved?	
			···	
Q16	Do you feel the State Library of Queensland should co Online Homework Help Service as a statewide program	ntinue to su 1?	upport the	e Yourtutor
			Definitely Probably	1
		'	Not sure No	2 3
Now	iust a few questions for analysis purposes.	-	140	4
Q17	Did your library service subscribe to the Yourtutor Online to July 2008, when the State Library commenced support			rvice prior
			Yes	1 2
			No	

Q18	In which council is your library service located? [PROGRAMMING WILL BRING UPA LIST OF LOCAL COUNCILS SOURCED http://signon.slq.qld.gov.au/check_library.php]	FROM
Q19	Approximately how many staff are in your library, including yourself?	
	Just myself	1
	2 to 3	2
	4 to 6	3
	6 to 10	4
	More than 10	5
Q20	Lastly, do you have any further comments about the Yourtutor service?	

END

