



# Summary Report

2015—2017



# Executive Summary

The collection of 2017 First 5 Forever report data from 61 Queensland councils indicate public libraries and Indigenous Knowledge Centres (IKCs) are firmly established as a quality source of free early literacy support and programming for families of children aged 0-5.

There has been a steep increase in attendances at First 5 Forever activities and significant increases in community reach through the growth of outreach participation and engagement with local partners.

Libraries and IKCs are delivering flexible and responsive outreach programs in their local community.

There is also strong evidence that families are retaining key messages and strategies delivered by library staff, and that they value the early literacy support First 5 Forever activities provide.

Library staff are showing increased awareness and confidence in supporting families to play an active role in their child's literacy and language development and their contribution and role is valued in early years networks.

Libraries and IKCs will focus on continuing to build on the strengths of staff, library programs and outreach into 2018.

## At a glance 2015-2017

**2 million\*** Queenslanders are a member of their local public library.

**1,933,800** attendances recorded at early literacy sessions in libraries and in the community.

2017 saw an **88%** increase in attendances from 2015.

**475,080** early literacy resources distributed to Queensland public libraries and IKCs for use in the home environment. These are in addition to resources created by libraries and IKCs.

**1,844** attendances at First 5 Forever professional development for library staff and community partners. Tailored programs were delivered in **27** locations throughout Queensland supporting the delivery of high quality early literacy sessions.

**\$13.5 million** has been made available to Queensland local councils.

**978** community partners engaged in 2017 indicating a strong investment in early literacy at a local level.

**2,024,078** impressions recorded on the First 5 Forever Facebook page.

Source: Queensland Public Library Statistical Bulletin 2016/17



## Background

First 5 Forever is a family literacy initiative delivered by public libraries with the primary aim of providing strong early literacy foundations for all Queensland children aged 0-5 years. It connects families to the information, resources and support they need to build the best foundation for their child's future language and literacy development.

First 5 Forever is a \$20 million initiative of the Queensland Government, coordinated by State Library of Queensland and delivered in partnership with local government. It is delivered through a network of more than 320 public libraries and IKCs. The initiative provides funding directly to councils to implement programs, resources, services and community partnerships that collectively support the early literacy development of 0-5 year old children and their families.

# First 5 Forever core deliverable results 2015-2017

Core Deliverable	Measure	2015	2016	2017	Notes
Increasing access to early literacy experiences	No. of councils programming sessions for 0-5 year olds and caregivers	40	47	50	*Represents all early literacy sessions held in libraries. This total does not include IKC sessions as they report across a different time period. See next page for details.
	No. of in-library First 5 Forever sessions	20.8k	21.6k	30.4k*	
	No. of attendances to in-library sessions	444.6k	455.8k	791.1k*	
Reaching all families with children 0-5	No. of councils purchasing First 5 Forever toolkits and resources	47	39	44	*2017 figure indicates toolkits distributed in the reporting period, not purchased
	No. of toolkits purchased for distribution	19k	25.7k	21.4k*	
	No. of outreach events	1.1k	8k	3.5k	
	No. of attendances at outreach events	38.5k	87.7k	116.1k	
Collaborative partnerships and coordination	No. of community partners engaged	625	571	978	
	% of partnerships a direct result of First 5 Forever	60%	73%	79%	
	No. of councils participating in a reference group	19	32	22	
Family and community awareness campaign	No. of sessions on First 5 Forever website	N/A	39.2k	28.2k	* This figure does not include council generated Facebook impressions
	Value of published media articles	N/A	\$207k	\$240k	
	No. of Facebook impressions	N/A	983k	1.04m*	
Workforce capability and standards	No. of participants in State Library professional development sessions	617	673	554	*Online professional development introduced to supplement face to face workshops
	No. of workshops delivered by SLQ staff	17	20	17	
	No. of workshop locations	13	14	10*	
Backbone organisation	Amount of First 5 Forever funding made available to councils	\$4.5m	\$4.5m	\$4.5m	
	No. of participating councils and IKCs	56	59	62	

# Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Council participation

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Councils report First 5 Forever data as part of their Service Level Agreement on a financial year cycle.

Therefore this data is presented separately but should be considered as part of the statewide delivery of First 5 Forever throughout Queensland.

First 5 Forever was delivered in ten Indigenous Councils with **\$36,291** being allocated for 2016/17 based on a demographic model.

To date, staff from 12 Indigenous Councils have attended First 5 Forever professional development workshops both in Brisbane and in regional locations.

In March 2017, a First 5 Forever workshop was delivered on Thursday Island in the Torres Strait. Participants placed high value on the community action planning that formed part of the training and

developed strategies that suited their community. Comments included:

*"[Best aspect] Getting to know how to have strong relationships with community and families"*

*"[I will] explain how important reading and talking to your child is... Demonstrate suggestions for every day, achievable things for parents to do."*

*All parents need to know about the first 5 [years] of their child's life and how to nurture them"*

*"Reading books is not scary - don't even need to read the words. Use pics for play and talking"*

As part of the two day workshop, participants filmed local key messages for use in social media and recorded rhymes in English and in Torres Strait Languages and Torres Strait Creole for others to learn and share. These have been compiled into a short video posted to YouTube.

## Resources

First 5 Forever have produced a *Guide to Story Time at your IKC* in response to requests from Indigenous Councils. The guide includes strategies for creating welcoming spaces and early literacy programs for Indigenous families in any public library, Indigenous Knowledge Centre or community space.

Nursery rhyme posters in Indigenous languages and English were developed and made available. Languages include Kungandji, Kala Kawaw Ya, and Mabuiag. A 'Shake your Mulla' poster was created by Mackay Regional Council Library's First 5 Forever team. It incorporates body part words in the traditional Yuwibara language.



Professional development workshop on Thursday Island

# 1. Increasing access to early literacy experiences

In 2017, **30,389** in-library sessions took place across the library network with **791,093** attendances reported at in-library First 5 Forever activities (a 40% increase in the number of sessions and a 74% increase in attendances from 2016).

Councils reported an increase in both sessions and a steady growth in attendances for the reporting period across all session types (Baby Time, Rhyme Time, Story Time). Examples from 2017 reporting include:

*"In total there were an estimated 12 453 attendees to First 5 Forever activities in 2017, an increase of over 100% compared to First 5 Forever activities in 2016. Parent interviews and feedback throughout 2017 has revealed that engaging with First 5 Forever is achieving its goal with interviewed parents clearly returning and actively applying key messages in support of early literacy. Many participants commented on the programs social benefits, confidence building and positive influence on home behaviours."*

The biggest increase in programming of "other 0-5" early literacy sessions indicates a growing confidence in library staff to innovate programs to meet local need and a focus from libraries on play based learning outside of the standard Baby Time, Rhyme Time and Story Time sessions.

A significant increase in attendances in Baby Time sessions has also been reported.

This rise can be attributed to the increased focus on library staff professional development for this age group with the Libraries, Literacy and Little Ones workshop launched in November 2016 and delivered 11 times during the reporting period.

*Throughout 2017 we have witnessed an increase in First 5 Forever activity participants, especially in Baby Rhyme Time. Parents and carers are responding to First 5 Forever's key messages, as we are seeing an increase in parent/carer-child engagement at our activities, including a number of inquiries being made in regards to how they can use everyday opportunities to assist in their child's literacy development.*



Source: Cairns Libraries



Source: Gympie Libraries

## What families say

### A growing awareness of early literacy development

- 'My little one knows the songs now and lights up when he hears them. This is down to the repetition.'
- 'My baby is only 9 months but every program day he shows lots of expressions, sways from side to side. When my baby sees the library he is overjoyed. When my husband gets home he is surprised at what new things the baby has learnt.'
- 'The library shows me what I am doing is right and tells me that it is really good to be reading and singing with (my child) at home, so then I feel good when I am doing it.'

### Increases in children's vocabulary and learned strategies to use at home

- 'My daughter has learnt all the songs, and can sing them on her own at home.'
- 'I'm learning the songs and can sing them at home as well which increases her exposure to words.'
- 'My baby loves the programs. I enjoyed the program because all the music, singing and activities really made my baby happy and then we get home, we would copy it.'

### An enhanced sense of community, belonging and social connection

- 'It is so great for new mums to find a comfortable place to interact with other parents and great for the babies to socialise. My baby has thoroughly enjoyed these outings!'
- 'Very interactive for children, and parents. I loved that classes were small, as sometimes with larger classes it's not so personal.'
- 'The social interaction for both my baby and myself were great and the staff were always so fun and interactive.'

## What libraries say

### Library staff are also reporting seeing change in families

- 'Parents seem to be more interested in the children's development and what they can do to encourage them and understand what they are capable of.'
- 'Understanding the need to engage with parents regarding literacy. A little girl's first sentence was "all day long" because Wheels on the Bus was her favourite song at our sessions.'
- 'In 2017 we have expanded the children's languages other than English (LOTE) picture book collection from three languages to seven languages. This is an indication of the diversity of the families we are now reaching, most of them attending the children's programs.'



Source: Tablelands Libraries

## Examples of families retaining and actively applying key early literacy behaviours.

### Rockhampton Regional Libraries

A wonderful example of the effectiveness of the First 5 Forever program delivered by Rockhampton Regional Libraries is that of one of our regular families. Mum first started bringing their eldest child, Matilda in 2016, when she was just a few months old. Mum then encouraged Dad, Grandma and even Uncle to come along to the sessions regularly.

Matilda is now a confident participant in the First 5 Forever sessions at the library, and Mum and Dad both regularly tell us how much she loves reading and singing at home. Recently, they have just had their second child, and completed a membership for her at just seven days old! This is just one family of many who have discovered the joys and the benefits of reading with their little ones through the First 5 Forever programs at Rockhampton Regional Library.

### Gympie Regional Libraries

In-house Baby Bounce sessions have been the most successful of all the programs with attendance numbers consistently around 25 babies. The evidence of these families recognition of the importance of these sessions can be observed in their interactions with their babies (and sometimes toddlers). It is a regular occurrence to see a floor full of mums, dads, grandies and carers reading quietly with their babies, singing songs, acting out finger plays or "rowing" boats down endless streams.



Source: Sunshine Coast Libraries

## 2. Reaching all families with children aged 0-5

In 2017, libraries held or participated in **3,455** First 5 Forever outreach sessions, and reported more than **116,106** attendances. Attendances at outreach events have increased 32% from 2016.

The drop in number of outreach events in 2017 may indicate that libraries are being more strategic and focusing on the events where the reach is greatest. This could also be attributed to the emphasis on in-library programming in the professional development workshops delivered in 2017.



Cairns Libraries Splash and Sing sessions

### Number of reported attendances as part of First 5 Forever

	2015	2016	2017	% Change from 2016
<b>Outreach Attendances</b>	38.5k	87.7k	116.1k	32.4%

In 2017, **44 councils** reported engaging in some form of outreach activity focussing on early literacy. Pop up libraries and transportable kits used for outreach activities grew in popularity due to their visual appeal and brand recognition. These were popular options as they could be deployed multiple times in a variety of locations both indoors and outdoors.

### Outreach story: Cairns Regional Council

Splash and Sing is a Rhyme Time session hosted at Tobruk pool. These interactive sessions include stories, rhymes and active movement songs for young children. Families are welcome to visit the Pop-Up Library after the session.

Splash and Sing is an initiative with the aim of supporting families to add songs, rhymes and storytelling to simple daily routines such as bath time.

### First 5 Forever resources

New resources in 2017 included nursery rhyme posters in both local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages and English for use in programs and displays in IKCs and in communities, brochures that incorporate graphics for universal appeal, tips sheets on activating highlighted books for library staff and printable book flyers for use with families that provide ideas for book sharing at home.



**21,398** toolkits and **90,223** additional resources were distributed to families during the reporting period.

*"The puppet was great to transition from the book to the bath. We're always looking for fun books to read that capture his attention. My son recognises the songs on the DVD from Rhyme Time."*

# 3. Collaborative partnerships and coordination

In 2017 public libraries reported partnering with 978 community partners which is an increase of 73% from 2016. Of these partners, 79% are directly attributed to the First 5 Forever initiative.

Reports provide extensive success stories of partnerships leading to new families in the library and shared positive outcomes.



NAIDOC week outreach event in Mossman

## Partnership stories



*In Gympie Book boxes have been delivered to eight local doctors' surgeries to provide families with children's books for sharing while waiting. The response to this initiative was shared anecdotally in meetings but also positively discussed on social media.*

*From May 2017, Ipswich Central Library became the venue for a new Accessible Playgroup. Ipswich Libraries is the first library service in Queensland to have a formal partnership agreement signed with Playgroup Queensland and First 5 Forever. The playgroup has been well attended with families borrowing items each week after they attend. Many of these families have not visited the library previously. 27 different families have attended since it commenced with an average of 12 families at each session. 18 new Ipswich Library memberships have been a direct result of the Playgroup's existence.*

*The Balonne Shire Council Library services provided monthly Story Time activities to the community, welcoming families from all demographics. In 2017 the St George Library partnered with the Sunshine Playgroup (a playgroup that focuses on families from low social and economic backgrounds). Partnering with the playgroup resulted in more families with children using library services and engaging with F5F activities.*

*Toowoomba began offering sessions at Bunnings stores. Working with the Activities Officer we developed a Street Library project in which the design and embellishment was children led. Through this project we were contacted by Bunnings at the national level and were able to have discussions with them about how early literacy ideas can be incorporated into Bunnings programs.*

## 4. Family and community awareness campaign

Supporting the work of libraries promoting their local activities, State Library deploys a range of offline and online marketing strategies on various platforms to increase awareness of the initiative and to promote the importance of early literacy.

In 2017, the dedicated First 5 Forever Facebook page **generated over a million impressions, 9,738 post engagements and 4,454 link clicks**. It also grew from 3,492 followers to **5,544 followers**.

Subscribers to the families newsletter also grew substantially in 2017 with **2175 new recipients**, bringing the total to **3711**.

The creation of a series of videos to promote First 5 Forever and socialise the science behind the initiative has been a successful marketing strategy with them achieving almost **300,000 combined views**.

In 2017, 345 media articles mentioned First 5 Forever (up from 189 in 2016) with a total estimated audience of **2,265,065** and an Advertising Space Rate (ASR) of **\$239,944**.

Screen grab from the First 5 Forever website



Still from *Little Moments, Big Impact* video

## 5. Workforce capability and standards

In 2017, **17 workshops** were delivered in **10 locations** throughout Queensland including Thursday Island in the far north, Emerald in the west and the Sunshine Coast in the South East.

**554 participants** representing **46 regional councils** participated in professional development in addition to key early childhood workforce representatives in local communities.

Professional development workshops in 2017 focussed on enhancing the early literacy capability of the library workforce with **90%** of workshop participants in 2017 coming from public libraries

and Indigenous Knowledge Centres from across Queensland (compared to 68% in 2016).

Ensuring content continues to meet the needs of local communities and reflects the learning needs of library and IKC staff, local library staff were included as co-facilitators of regional workshops in 2017.

The need for flexible professional development options to address Queensland's geographical spread, improve access and facilitate collaboration saw the introduction in 2017 of **online workshops** with the commencement of webinars.



## 6. Central coordination, data collection, evaluation and reporting

In 2017 grant funding was distributed to councils under a Service Level Agreement. The total distributed was **\$4,506,186**.

Participating councils in 2017 cover over **99% of the Queensland population**.

**62 local councils** participated in 2017 including ten Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander councils delivering First 5 Forever through 22 Indigenous Knowledge Centres.

- Aurukun Shire Council (1 IKC)
- Cherbourg Aboriginal Shire Council (1 IKC)
- Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council (1 IKC)
- Lockhart River Aboriginal Shire Council (1 IKC)
- Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council (4 IKCs)
- Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council (1 IKC)
- Pormpuraaw Aboriginal Shire Council (1 IKC)
- Torres Strait Island Regional Council (10 IKCs)
- Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council (1 IKC)
- Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council (1 IKC)

Queensland University of Technology (QUT) Digital Media Research Centre was engaged to map the broader societal impact of First 5 Forever, with specific reference to the value of public libraries across eight criteria utilising the Creative Spaces Framework. The report Evaluating the Impact of the First 5 Forever Initiative is available to download at [www.slq.qld.gov.au/F5F](http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/F5F)

Findings from this report reveal that First 5 Forever has achieved strong impacts across all target measures.

While primarily built around promoting and improving early literacy, the initiative was also found to be a community facilitator and connector, supporting families and children through a culture of participation and lifelong learning.

### First 5 Forever Impact Score /5

Source: QUT Digital Media Research Centre



- ★ CULTURAL PARTICIPATION Very Strong Impact
- ★ HEALTH & WELLBEING Very Strong Impact
- ★ BUILDING IDEAS Very Strong Impact
- ★ COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT Very Strong Impact
- ★ ACCESSING RESOURCES Very Strong Impact
- ★ EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT Very Strong Impact
- ★ CIVIC ENGAGEMENT Strong Impact
- ★ ECONOMIC PRODUCTIVITY Very Strong Impact

Reporting data for 2017 has been received from 50 Councils to date (96% of participating councils) and all participating (10) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Councils for 2016/2017.

## Focus for libraries in 2018

Councils were also asked to highlight the areas that their council planned to focus First 5 Forever implementation in 2018. 'Outreach' was the main response with 19% but this was only slightly larger than 'Planning Library programs.' This means that libraries will continue to balance their in-library and outreach momentum to continue to provide

opportunities to support families who are valuing the benefits of regular attendance at library programs; in addition to reaching new families and those who are not yet regular library users.

The challenges of marketing and working better with partners are also addressed in the areas to focus on in 2018.

### Reported Areas of Focus

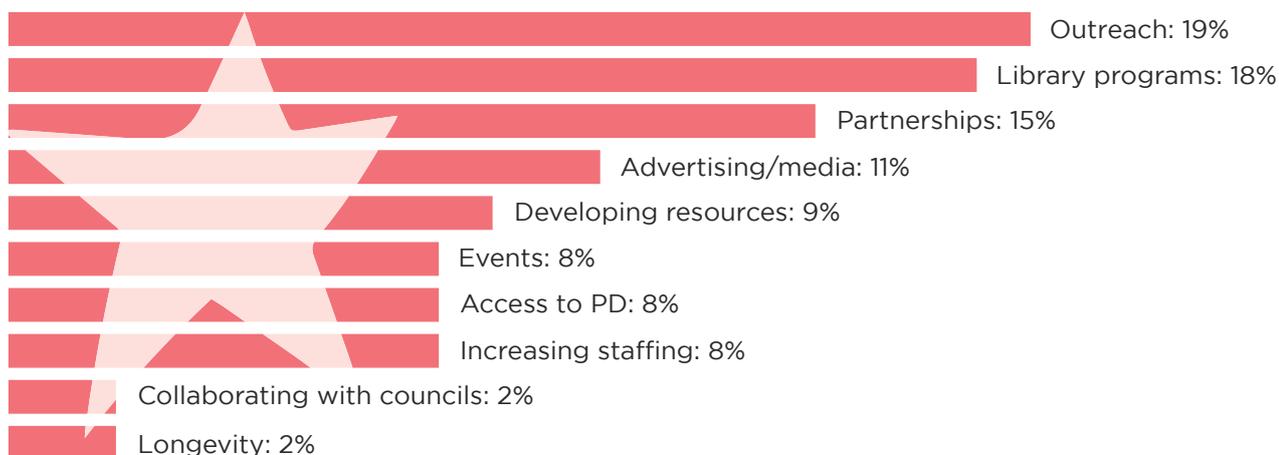


Image source: Bundaberg Regional Libraries



Image source: Redland City Libraries

## Focus for State Library in 2018

- Continued delivery of professional development programs focusing on topics in response to public library and IKC needs including face-to face, online webinars and an annual forum.
- A framework for the final evaluation of the four year initiative.
- Continued collaboration with public libraries and the IKC network to support quality early literacy programs that are scalable and responsive to local families.
- Expansion of resources to support libraries in programming activities to support early literacy development.
- A photo competition and videos to promote the initiative and engage parents and caregivers.
- Continued focus on statewide parent and caregiver awareness building through marketing and communication initiatives.



[first5forever.org.au](http://first5forever.org.au) | [first5forever@slq.qld.gov.au](mailto:first5forever@slq.qld.gov.au)