



first5forever

2018 Report

Reporting period: 01 December 2017 – 31 December 2018

First 5 Forever was launched in 2015 as a \$20 million four-year initiative of the Queensland Government, coordinated by State Library of Queensland and delivered through public libraries and IKCs in partnership with local government. The initiative provided 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. In July 2018, the State Government announced that funding for First 5 Forever would continue, and an ongoing annual investment of \$5 million would be provided. This report provides data on the final year of the initial four-year delivery of the program and provides direction on how councils will continue to deliver quality early literacy programs and resources for all Queensland families of children aged 0-5.

In the four years since its launch, First 5 Forever has been successful in highlighting the importance of early literacy support and the value of enabling families to embrace their vital role in developing their child's literacy.

At a glance 2018



Over **99%** of Queensland's population covered by **70** participating councils.

873,237 attendances at in-library First 5 Forever activities, up **10.4%**

First 5 Forever was represented at **3711** outreach events, with **144,440** estimated attendances at outreach events, up **6%**

43 councils reporting participating in outreach events

135,268 resources distributed to families, up **20.9%**

1,839 partner organisations and agencies engaged with First 5 Forever in 2018 up **88%** (**62%** of these partnerships are directly attributed to First 5 Forever.)

8,695 First 5 Forever Facebook page followers at the end of 2018, up **56%**

11 workshops were delivered in **6** locations across Queensland plus **6** webinars.

701 participants from **66** councils attended professional development opportunities.

3,224,078 Facebook impressions since the page launched in July 2016.

Collated evidence of First 5 Forever against core deliverables in 2018

1. Increasing access to early literacy experiences

In 2018, **32,308** in-library sessions took place across the library network with **873,237** attendances reported at in-library First 5 Forever activities (a **6.6%** increase in the number of sessions and **10.4%** increase in attendances from 2017).

Councils reported an increase in both sessions and steady growth in attendances for the reporting period across all sessions with the largest growth in attendances in Story Time (14.3%) and Rhyme Time (13.3%) sessions.



2. Reaching all families with children aged 0-5

In 2018, libraries collectively ran or participated in **3,711** outreach sessions (6% increase) and reported **144,440** attendances. Attendances at outreach events have increased 24.4% from 2017. Emphasis on outreach continues to be the most significant change enabled by First 5 Forever funding as councils of all sizes are able to release staff from delivering on site and support genuine community engagement with local families and develop partnerships.

In 2018, **43 councils** reported engaging in some form of outreach activity focussing on early literacy. The variety of events supported grew in 2018 and this is also supported through the number of community partners almost doubling.

Outreach sessions include both regularly scheduled sessions held in public areas hosted by library staff and participation in community-based family friendly events.

In 2018, an increase in the range of diverse partners, locations and target audiences has resulted in early literacy messages being delivered to an increasingly inclusive audience through channels that families connect to. Swimming pools, local agricultural shows, shopping centres, NAIDOC week, dentists waiting rooms and barber shops are all places where you can find First 5 Forever in Queensland.



3. Collaborative partnerships and coordination

In 2018, public libraries reported partnering with 1,839 community partners which is twice as many as the previous year. Of these, 65% of partnerships were reported as directly attributable to First 5 Forever.

Reports provide extensive success stories of partnerships leading to new families attending First 5 Forever. Shared outcomes are being achieved and First 5 Forever is now being seen as a partner of choice in many councils. Library staff are establishing or participating in strong community partnerships and steering groups, which has resulted in libraries being considered a hub for community capacity building and as having an essential role in early childhood development.

First 5 Forever continues to provide libraries with the opportunity to connect with local businesses and organisations and develop partnerships that reach families. It also provides multiple connection points for key messages to be shared and pathways for libraries to share and connect with.

4. Family and community awareness campaign

The dedicated First 5 Forever Facebook page generated over 1.2 million impressions, 16,900 post engagements and 6,201 link clicks. It also grew from 5,544 to 8,695 followers. The use of videos proved again to be an effective content strategy, with 148,000 views recorded on the Facebook platform.

Engagement through the parent newsletter and on social media has grown substantially over the reporting period. 35,991 sessions and 70,555 page views were recorded on the website.

Regular email communications via the family newsletter have consistently achieved well above industry standards with open rates upwards of 33.0% (industry average 21.8%). The subscriber base has also grown from 3,430 in December 2017 to 5,515 in December 2018.

Over the reporting period, 314 media articles were published with a total estimated reach of 12,612,463.

Queensland councils have also been active using their own social media channels and local campaigns to promote First 5 Forever. Branding has appeared on murals, buses and bus shelters, in parks, on vans, on screens in waiting rooms and in all the community noticeboards, newsletters and newspapers. Community and local ABC radio has also been used to promote First 5 Forever sessions throughout Queensland.



5. Workforce capability and standards

In 2018, **11 workshops** were delivered to **411 participants** in **seven locations** throughout Queensland including Atherton in the far north, Dalby in the west and four on site at State Library Queensland. Six webinars were delivered giving 290 participants across the state access to professional development resources.

In total, **701 participants** representing **66 regional councils** participated in professional development in addition to key early childhood workforce representatives in local communities.

Professional development workshops and webinars in 2018 focussed on amplifying the opportunities for co-facilitation from public library and IKC staff. Co-facilitators were able to ensure relevant, localised information gained from direct practice and experiences with communities were valued and shared with staff from across the state.