



State Library  
of Queensland

# LIBRARIES FOR LITERACY

every day, every way: 2011–2014







State Library of Queensland, and the network of more than 340 public libraries and Indigenous Knowledge Centres across the state, are committed to building literacy through innovation and collaboration so Queenslanders can actively participate in the social, economic and cultural life of their communities.

## Literacy today

We live in a knowledge-rich society, characterised by a wealth of ideas and information. The ability to understand, communicate and transfer this abundance of information is built upon the foundation skills of reading and writing. But literacy today has broadened in scope: it is multimodal, tied to technology and culture, and people need to acquire an increasing range of literacy skills to communicate effectively in a digital environment.

## Libraries for literacy — every day, every way

Public libraries are transformative places and literacy is the bedrock of their ethos and rationale. With a focus on engagement, discovery, reading and belonging, libraries offer specialised workforce, infrastructure, programs and collections to aid literacy support in communities.

*Libraries for literacy — every day, every way* is a framework for the development of responsive literacy services to be delivered by State Library of Queensland, in partnership with Queensland public libraries and other literacy providers.

By creating a literacy framework, State Library is proactively addressing state and national education agendas and affirming public libraries as valued literacy and learning enablers.

## Literacy in Queensland — a snapshot

- 46% of adult Australians cannot function effectively in a knowledge-based economy, due to poor literacy<sup>1</sup>
- 15.9% of Queensland children identify as being developmentally vulnerable on two or more Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) measures in their first year of school<sup>2</sup>
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are considered more developmentally vulnerable in each of the AEDI measures than non-Indigenous children, with a higher proportion of children living in very remote areas considered developmentally vulnerable in each of the AEDI measures<sup>3</sup>
- 50% of 15 to 24-year-olds are unable to read to an adequate level to properly function in society<sup>4</sup>
- 50% of our language is learned by three years of age<sup>5</sup>

## Guiding principles

Four principles guide the goals of *Libraries for literacy — every day, every way*. They aim to maximise relevance for urban, regional, rural and remote communities and have been shaped by consultation with government and non-government organisations, public libraries, academic institutions and peak bodies.

Literacy support should be:

- **equitable and inclusive** — providing optimal services, programs and resources for all people at all stages of learning, acknowledging context and respecting cultural diversity
- **community centred** — reflecting local context and aligning with local need, acknowledging literacy and learning is central to robust and resilient communities
- **collaborative** — enabling the community, government, business and education sectors to work together to extend the reach of literacy support and solve complex social issues
- **sustainable** — ensuring appropriate resources, partnerships and evaluation tools are available

## Goals

*Libraries for literacy — every day, every way* seeks to guide the development of community literacy services to be delivered by State Library of Queensland, partnering with Queensland public libraries, state and local government, and relevant literacy providers. Together, we will work within this framework to:

1. **advocate greater understanding** of the value of reading to children, and parents' effect on early childhood cognitive, language, emotional and social development
2. **elevate the role** of State Library and public libraries in providing literacy support for everyone; promote literacy as integral to library strategic planning, service delivery, and community responsibilities
3. **raise awareness** of State Library and the public library network's value and capacity when addressing literacy issues on state and local education agendas relating to social, cultural and economic sustainability
4. **build collaborative relationships** across many sectors including education, community, cultural, technology and library sectors to extend the reach of literacy improvement opportunities

# Libraries for literacy

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

equitable and inclusive

community centred

sustainable

collaborative

## GOALS

Advocate greater understanding of the value of reading to children, and parents' effect on early childhood cognitive, language, emotional and social development

Elevate the role of State Library and public libraries in providing literacy support for everyone; promote literacy as integral to library strategic planning, service delivery, and community responsibilities

Raise awareness of State Library and public library networks value and local capacity when addressing literacy issues on cultural and economic sustainability

Build collaborative relationships across many sectors to reach of literacy and library improvement opportunities including education, community, cultural, technology and library sectors to extend the reach of literacy into communities

## PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

**Family literacy**  
supporting children and their parents and carers in ensuring better literacy begins at home

**Social disadvantage**  
supporting groups experiencing disadvantage, including Indigenous, remote, and non English speaking communities

**Digital literacy**  
delivering essential skills to participate fully in 21st century society

**Collaboration**  
building partnerships across multiple sectors to extend the reach of literacy into communities

**Advocacy**  
one message validating the role of State Library and public libraries as a key literacy service, complementing other programs

**Effective workforces**  
professional development opportunities to deliver sustainable literacy services

**Build collaborative relationships across many sectors to reach of literacy and library improvement opportunities including education, community, cultural, technology and library sectors to extend the reach of literacy into communities**

**Effective workforces**  
professional development opportunities to deliver sustainable literacy services

**Advocacy**  
one message validating the role of State Library and public libraries as a key literacy service, complementing other programs

**Build collaborative relationships across many sectors to reach of literacy and library improvement opportunities including education, community, cultural, technology and library sectors to extend the reach of literacy into communities**

**Effective workforces**  
professional development opportunities to deliver sustainable literacy services

# LIBRARIES FOR LITERACY

## every day, every way: 2011–2014

### Priorities for action

Informed by the goals of the *Libraries for literacy — every day, every way* framework, the priorities for action are:

- **social disadvantage** — supporting groups experiencing disadvantage, including Indigenous, remote, and non English speaking communities
- **family literacy** — supporting children and their parents and carers in ensuring better literacy begins at home
- **digital literacy** — delivering essential skills to participate fully in 21st century society
- **effective workforces** — professional development opportunities to deliver sustainable literacy services
- **advocacy** — one message validating the role of State Library and public libraries as key contributors to literacy outcomes, complementing other programs
- **collaboration** — building partnerships across multiple sectors to extend the reach of literacy into communities

### Evaluating literacy programs — indicators for success

Evaluation identifies the contribution made by libraries to advance literacy. While the intent of the literacy framework is affirmation of literacy practice, rather than compliance, a simple evaluation can be developed to reflect the guiding principles and goals. In order to build in ongoing review and reflection, it is useful to work within an action learning framework (plan, act, observe, reflect) to ensure the achievement of wider program aims.

“Libraries, with their networks, geographical distribution, facilities, collections and professionalism bring an impressive net worth to the development of a culture of literacy”

*(Robert Wedgeworth, 2003)*

### Evaluation framework

Goal	Measurement
1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Number of family literacy programs hosted by public libraries</li><li>• Number of attendees at family literacy programs hosted by public libraries</li><li>• Feedback gathered from family literacy program participants recorded and analysed by public libraries</li><li>• Number of professional development programs delivered to public library and early childhood workforce annually</li></ul>
2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Literacy goals embedded in strategic planning as core public library business</li><li>• Community participates in literacy service development</li><li>• Community satisfaction with programs delivered (anecdotal)</li></ul>
3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• State Library advocates libraries as community literacy and learning places in state and local learning agendas and programs</li><li>• Literacy program data collated through annual State Library public library performance measurement process</li></ul>
4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• State Library hosts annual cross-sector literacy forum</li><li>• Number of collaborative programs established with literacy providers</li></ul>

### The high numbers for Queensland State and public libraries

- 1.3 million visits annually to State Library of Queensland
- 21 million visits annually to Queensland public libraries (1,750,000 visits per month)
- 41 million loans annually (3,416,666 loans from Queensland public libraries per month)
- 1.9 million Queensland public library members (45% population)





## Literacy definitions

**Foundation skills** — language, literacy, numeracy and employability skills in the information age.

(National Foundation Skills Working Group 2011)

**Early literacy** — knowledge and skills (developed up to age eight) required to become a successful reader and writer. These include cognitive development of the brain and its responsiveness to the caretaking environment, language development, listening and oral skills and relationship building with family and society.

**Family literacy** — encompasses the daily literacy practices of parents/carers, children, traditional and non-traditional families while negotiating relationships, both within the family and the broader community.

**Adult literacy** — the “ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, compute and use printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in their community and wider society.”

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

**Digital literacy** — the ability to confidently and critically use digital information sources, communications tools and networks for learning, communication, collaboration and creation.

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, State Government of Victoria

**Information literacy** — enables people to “recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate and use effectively the needed information.”

American Library Association Presidential Committee on Information Literacy. Final Report Chicago: American Library Association, 1989.

**Transliteracy** — the ability to read, write and interact across a range of platforms, tools and media from signing and orality through handwriting, print, TV, radio and film, to digital social networks.

The Transliteracy Research Group, Prof. Sue Thomas of De Montfort University, Leicester, UK

## For more information contact

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4228.0> Australian Bureau of Statistics 2007, Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey, Summary Results, Australia, cat. no. 4228.0, ABS, Canberra.

<sup>2</sup> [http://video.wch.org.au/aedi/National\\_Report-March\\_2011\\_Reissue\\_final.pdf](http://video.wch.org.au/aedi/National_Report-March_2011_Reissue_final.pdf) Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) Table 3.4: AEDI results for language and cognitive skills (school based) domain, National Report 2009, Re-issue – March 2011 Pg 21 <sup>3</sup> [http://video.wch.org.au/aedi/National\\_Report-March\\_2011\\_Reissue\\_final.pdf](http://video.wch.org.au/aedi/National_Report-March_2011_Reissue_final.pdf) Australian Early Development Index (AEDI) National Report 2009, Re-issue – March 2011 Pg 12 (Summary of key findings) <sup>4</sup> <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4102.0Chapter6102008> Australian Bureau of Statistics 2008, Australian social trends 2008 Australia, cat. No 4102.0, ABS, Canberra <sup>5</sup> [http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/assets/0000/7883/Updated\\_Strategic\\_Guidance\\_Paper.pdf](http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/assets/0000/7883/Updated_Strategic_Guidance_Paper.pdf) Hamer, Dr Cathy, Guidance for developing a strategic approach to speech, language and communication in the early years. Talk To Your Baby, National Literacy Trust, updated February 2011



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