

A survey of Clarence Valley and Bellingen  
12-25 year olds to measure their use of, and  
satisfaction with local library services



A random and representative survey of  
205 Clarence Valley and Bellingen Shire youth  
conducted by the **Clarence Regional Library**

**Report dated November 2013**

Clarence Regional Library: Bellingen, Dorrigo, Grafton Iluka, Maclean, Urunga and Yamba

## Background

The Clarence Regional Library Strategic Action Plan 2012-2022 Targeted Public consultations include:

- Developing a consultation plan
- Target particular groups on an annual basis
- Build results into future budget allocations
- Train staff or engage in a consultant
- Analyse results

The aim is to inform future collection development.

At the August 2012 CRLC meeting it was agreed that a survey of our youth be conducted relating to the collections and services provided to them.

Following a comprehensive review of other public library youth surveys, survey questions were developed which would provide feedback on the satisfaction levels of 12-25 year olds with library collections, services and facilities within all CRL libraries. Input from all library staff was incorporated into this process. The questions were placed into SurveyMonkey for online completion and analysis, and duplicated on print surveys as an alternative means of collection.

## Promotion

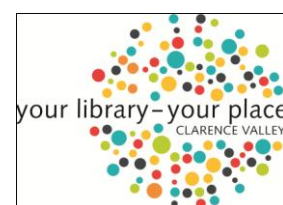
Awareness of the survey was generated through advertisements in all secondary school newsletters, newspaper media releases, radio advertising, and posters in libraries, library website and Facebook postings. As an incentive a prize of an Ipad3 was offered in each LGA.

The survey was offered in online and print form over a month from 26 August to 26 September, following which all print entries were entered into SurveyMonkey online in order to generate analytical statistics. A total of 205 surveys were submitted from both LGA's which compares favourably with a similar survey held in a metropolitan Sydney library service which had 400 returns in a population 4 times that covered by Clarence Regional Library.

## Some key findings

1. The main library used was Grafton (65.64%), then Maclean (24.10%), Bellingen (8.72%), Iluka (6.15%), Yamba (5.64%), Dorrigo (4.62%), Mobile Library (4.10%) and Urunga (2.56%).
2. 10.77% of respondents also noted their use of the library website
3. A larger proportion of responses were from females (62.56%), than from males (37.44%)
4. 77.34% of the respondents were aged between 12 and 18 years
5. 22.66% were aged 19-24
6. 66.01% were at school, while 20.69% were at TAFE or University.
7. Only 36.45% were working in any capacity – casual, part or fulltime

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8. 87.69% of respondents had a Clarence Regional Library card, which indicates that the majority of the young people who use the libraries are library members.
9. The response rates from various branches (see point 1) confirm that Grafton library receives the highest visitation by youth of all Clarence Regional Libraries. This is to be expected with the higher population for this location, and supports the current construction of the new Grafton library. It also highlights a possible need for a strong focus on enticing youth into other libraries.
10. 75.77% of the respondents use another library regularly – school (54.12%), TAFE (12.37%) and other local libraries (9.28%)
11. 64% of respondents primarily visit libraries by themselves, with 49.48% visiting with family and 19.79% with friends. Although there is overlap in this result as multiple answers could be given, the indication is that most youth visit the library alone. This has implications for the way that we market to this audience.
12. The fact that 38.97% of those completing the survey visit a library once a week or more, implies that the survey captured the more enthusiastic library users. 32.87% visit a library 1-2 times a month, 19.49% once every 2-6 months, 4.10% visit once a year and 4.62% less than this.
13. The main reason for visiting a library was to borrow books as 43.81% of respondents do this frequently and 35.05 % sometimes. Of 195 replies, 147 people borrowed books for leisure reading and 116 for study, meaning many users borrowed books for both purposes.
14. DVD's accounted for 18.46% of borrowing, magazines 24.62% and surprisingly graphic novels only accounted for 8.21% of loans from youth.
15. The next most frequent reason for visiting the library was to use the library computers with 31.03% doing this frequently, followed by 21.81% frequently using the library to do homework.
16. A result that requires consideration for future programme planning is that only 5.91% stated that they frequently attend library programmes or activities while 21.51% do this sometimes, 29.57% rarely and 43.01% never attend these activities. The opportunity for enhancing this is emphasised by the fact that 13.98% of people frequently use the library to hang out with friends and 24.73% do this sometimes.
17. Also of interest for planning of activities is identifying how young people hear about what's happening in the libraries. The response to this question showed that the biggest source of information on this was from library staff with 43.62% of respondents stating this. This is a good sign that library staff are prepared to enter into conversation with borrowers and promote our services. Only 13.83% obtain this information from the library facebook site and 15.96% from newspaper advertisements.

18. An excellent indication of the relevance of the library collection is shown by the fact that 88.72% of respondents either always or often find what they need at the library and only 0.51% never find what they need.
19. This received additional confirmation with 92.67% of respondents stating that the choice of books in the libraries is either good or excellent, 84.5% stating the same for magazines, 69.35% for the recently added DVD collection and 86.7% for the reference collection.
20. The top reason for using the library website was shown to be for accessing the catalogue (6.91% of respondents). Interestingly, a relatively small number (33.11%) identified accessing databases as something carried out on the web site, indicating a need to increase promotion of these resources which should be highly used by this age group.
21. Results indicated a strong interest in events and activities with 47.09% stating they would attend a library based event and 46.03% indicating this as a maybe.
22. The most desired activity was craft workshops (48%), followed by author visits (42.86%). Homework help workshops, movie clubs and computer gaming nights were all equally desirable with 38.86% stating they would attend each. 37.71% showed interest in an opportunity to volunteer, 34.29% would attend a music / dance / performance workshop, book discussions clubs and HSC talks each had 25.71% interest. The more performance based open mike or poetry readings showed the least interest at 16% and 10.86% respectively.
23. Both qualitative and quantitative results showed a very positive attitude towards library staff. 81.58% of respondents rated library staff as excellent while 14.21% rated them as good.
24. Of the 173 positive comments received, 39 were about staff specifically. Of the 111 negative comments received, there was no mention of staff. This seems to indicate that good staff attitudes have a very positive influence on the young people who use the libraries.

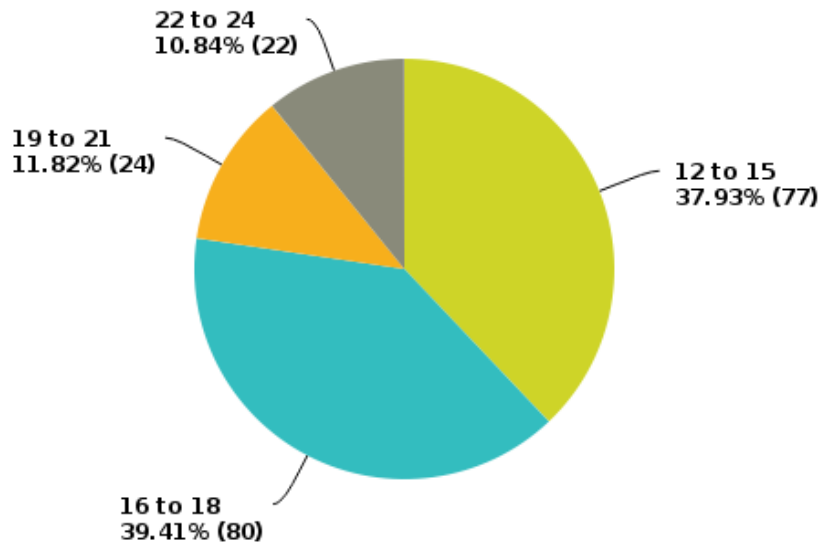
## Recommendations

- That we publish the results of the survey and post onto the library website
- That a general response to comments, complaints and suggestions be produced and posted to the website
- That consideration be given to addressing suggestions, including flagging those that will be addressed as part of the new Grafton library
- That consideration of these results and suggestions is incorporated into future planning of events, activities, collections, buildings and staff training.

Major data responses from the survey

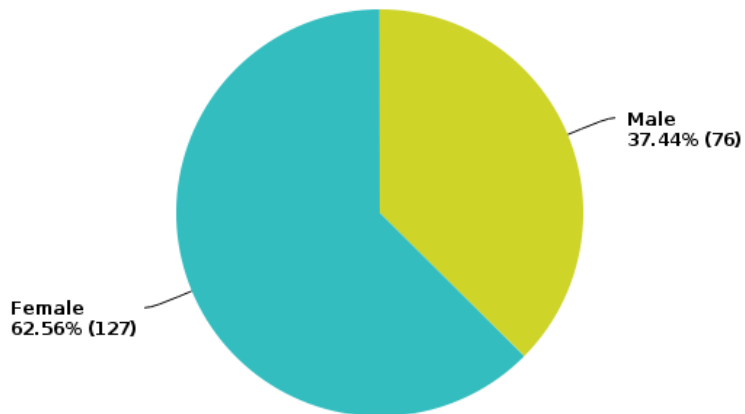
Q1 Your age:

Answered: 203 Skipped: 0

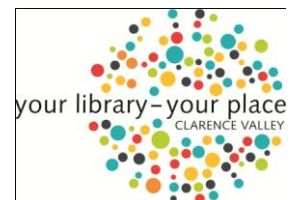


Q2 Are you:

Answered: 203 Skipped: 0

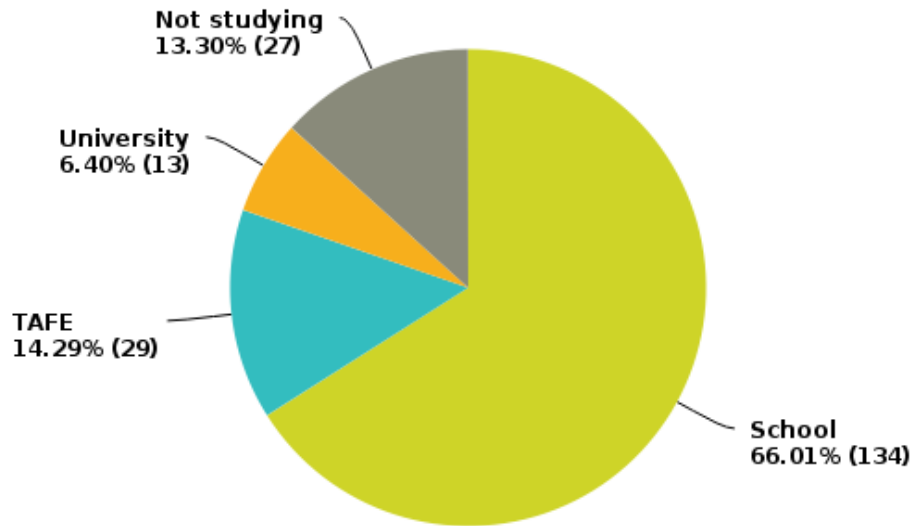


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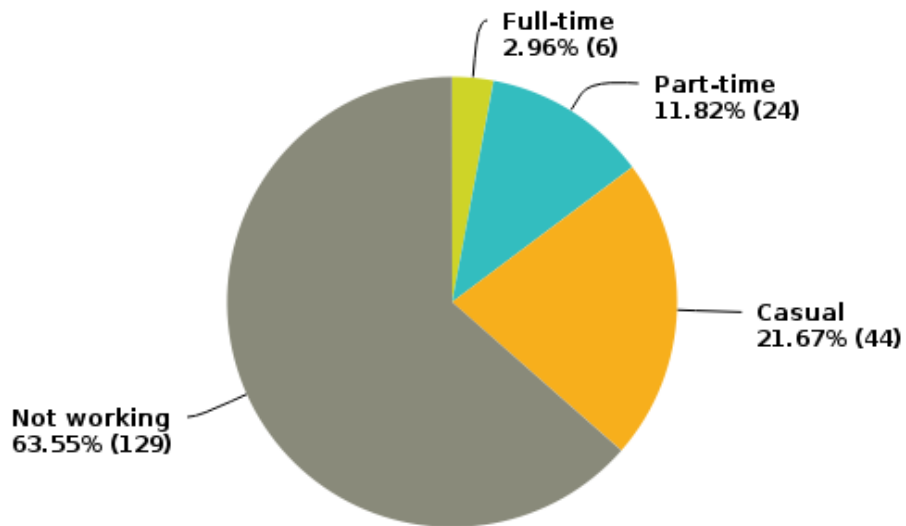
### Q3 Are you studying at:

Answered: 203 Skipped: 0

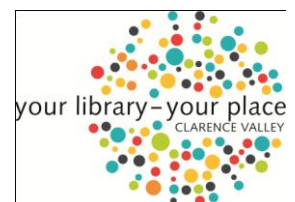


### Q4 Are you working:

Answered: 203 Skipped: 0

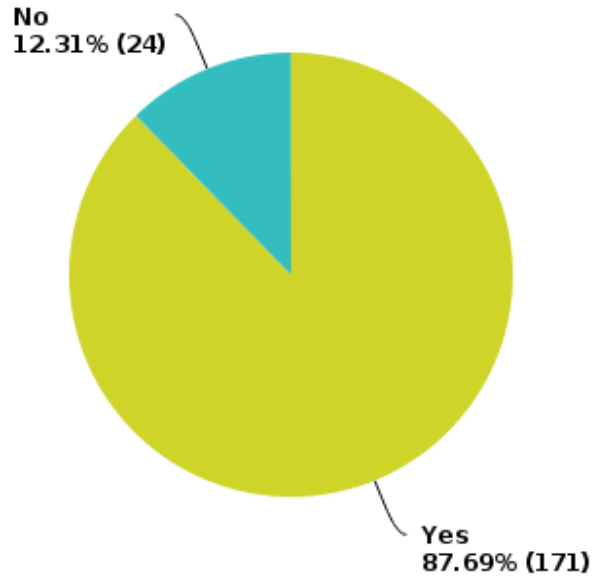


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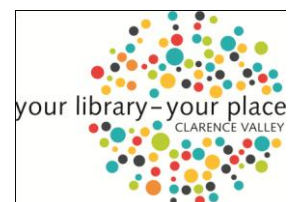


### Q5 Are you a member of the Clarence Regional Libraries?

Answered: 195 Skipped: 8

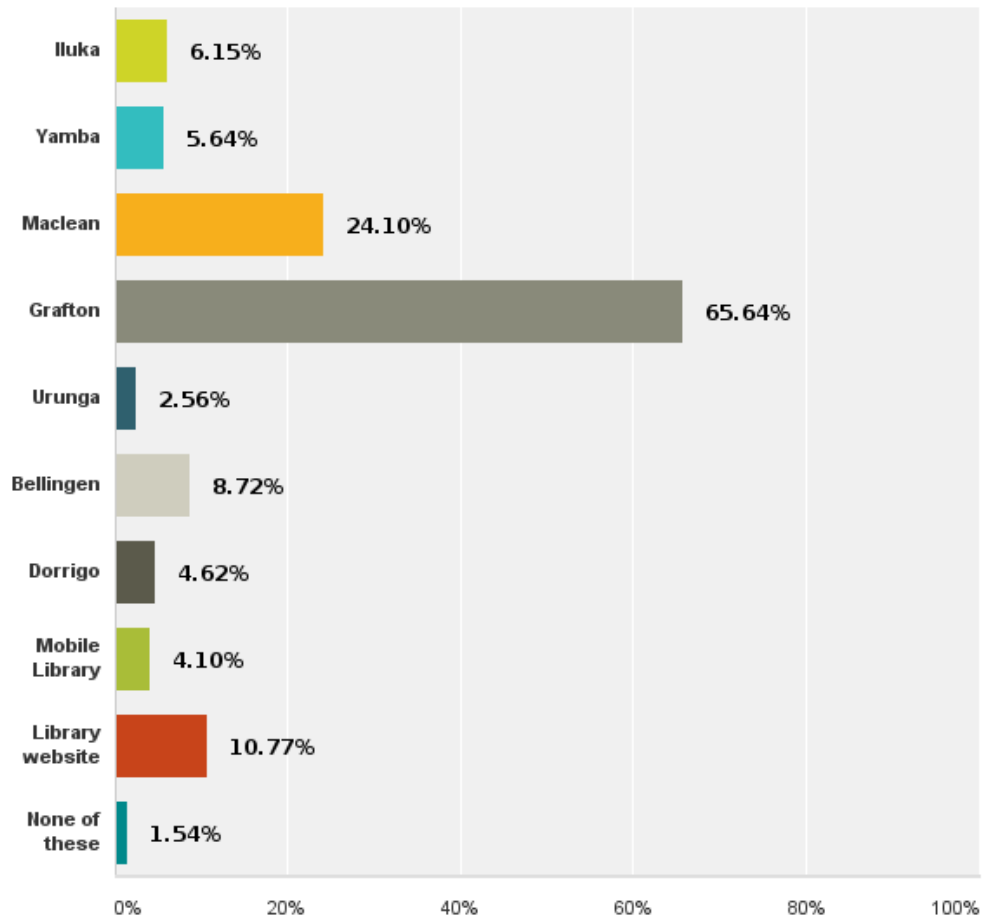


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## Q6 Which library do you use? (tick all that apply)

Answered: 195 Skipped: 8

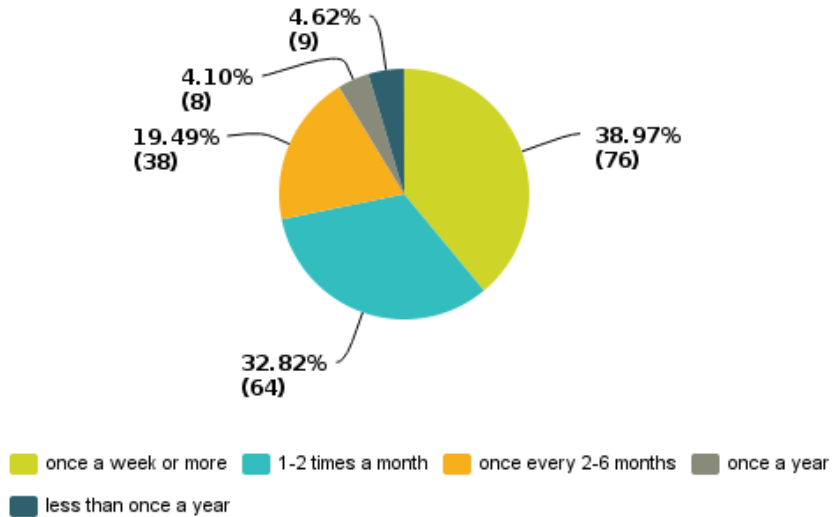


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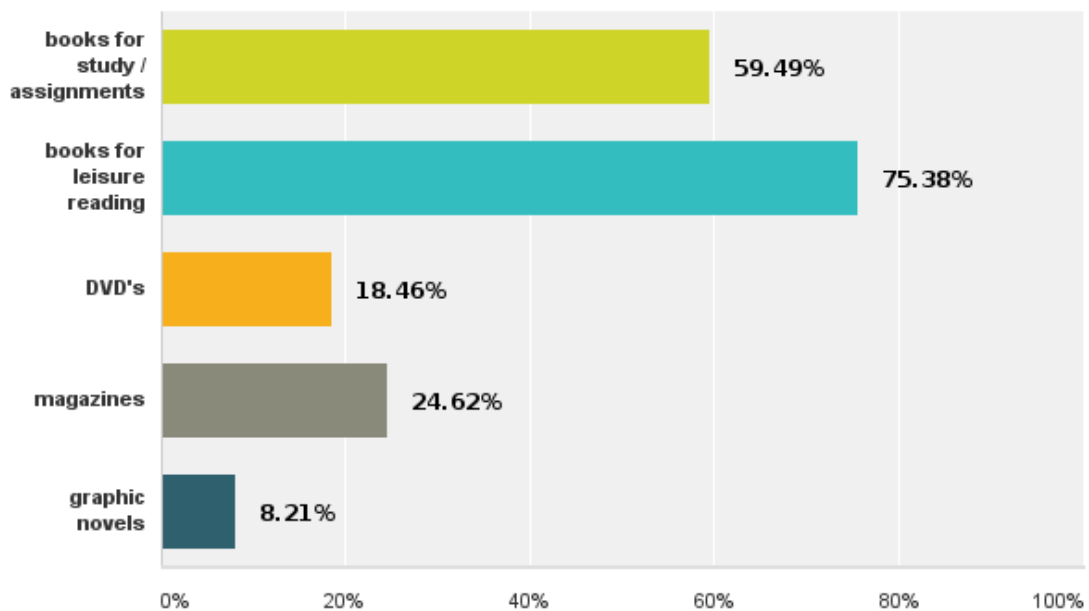
### Q8 How often do you visit one of the Clarence Regional Libraries?

Answered: 195 Skipped: 8

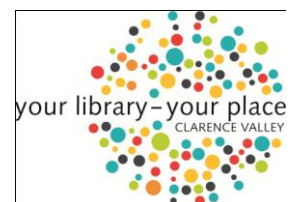


### Q11 The main items you borrow from the library are: (tick all that apply)

Answered: 195 Skipped: 8

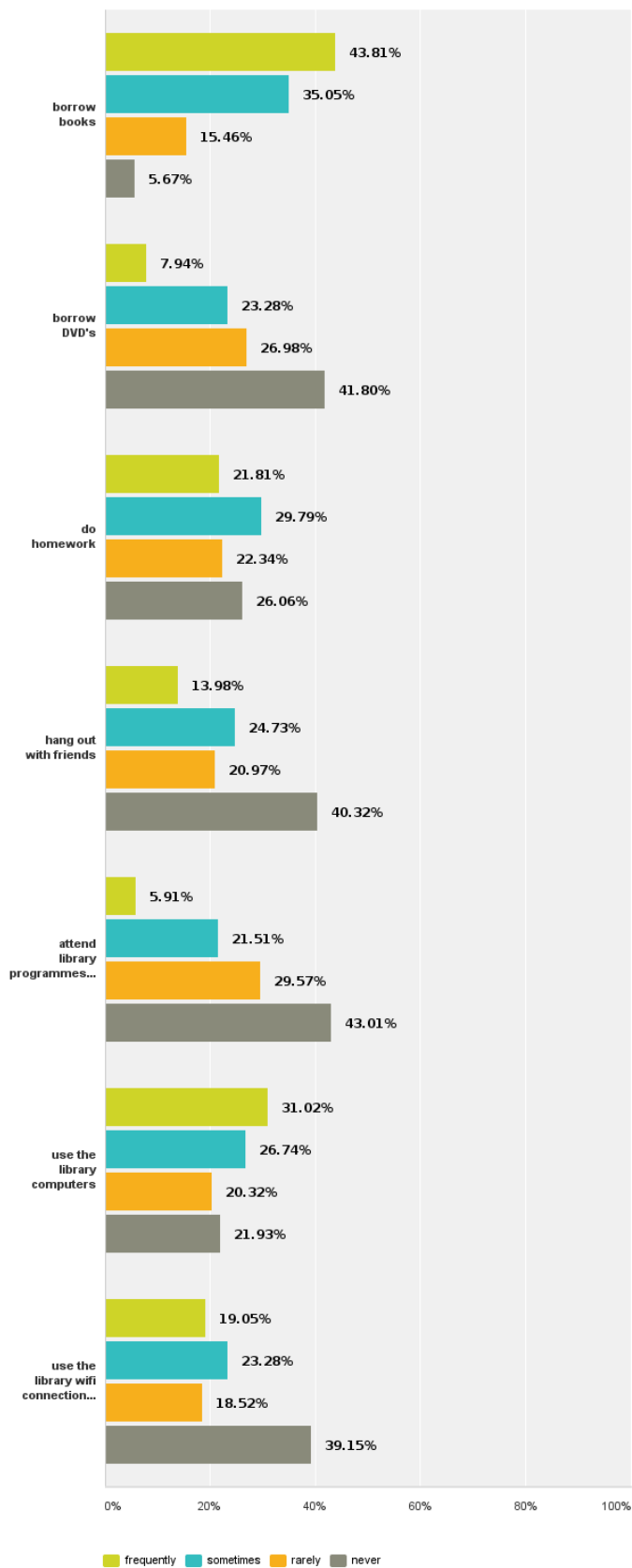


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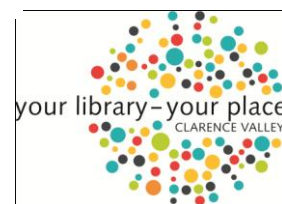


Q10 How often do you do the following when you visit a library?

Answered: 194 Skipped: 9

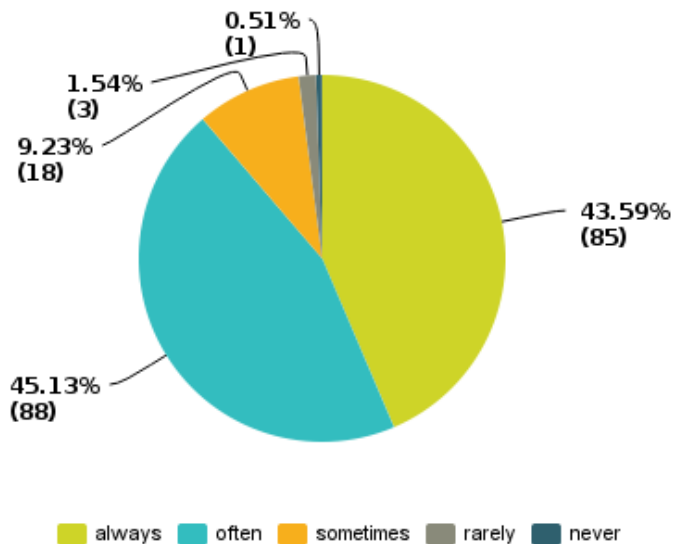


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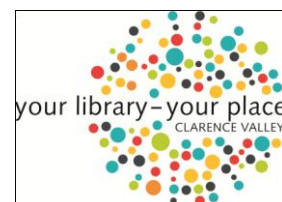


### Q12 You find what you need at the library:

Answered: 195 Skipped: 8

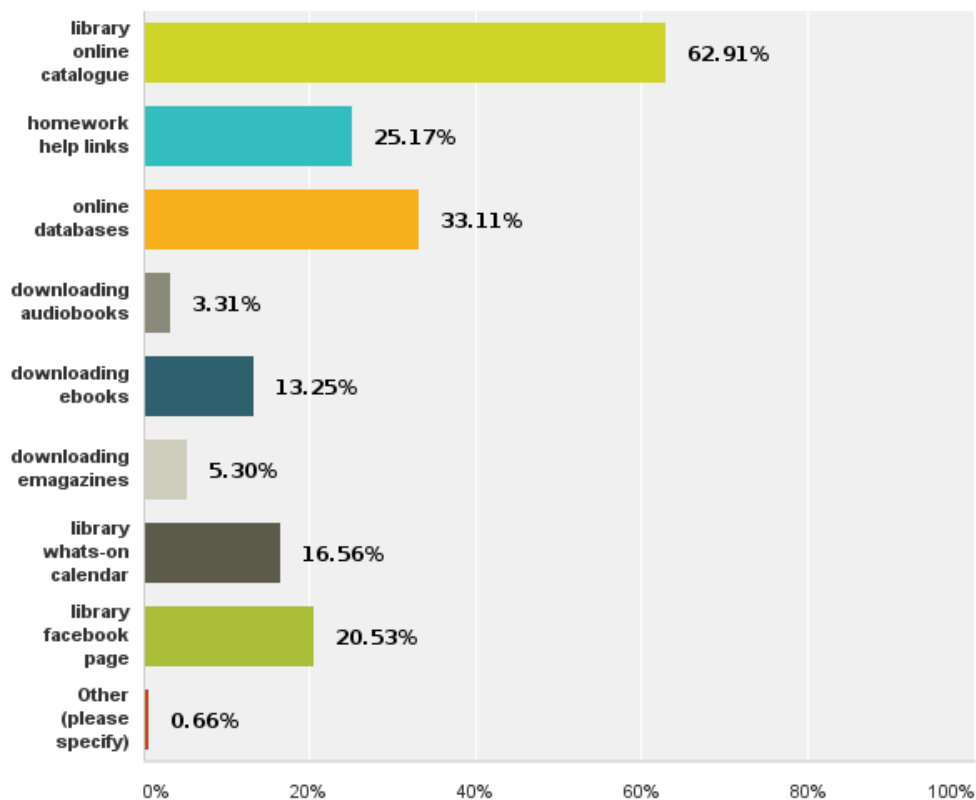


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### Q13 Have you used any of the following on the library website? (www.crl.nsw.gov.au)

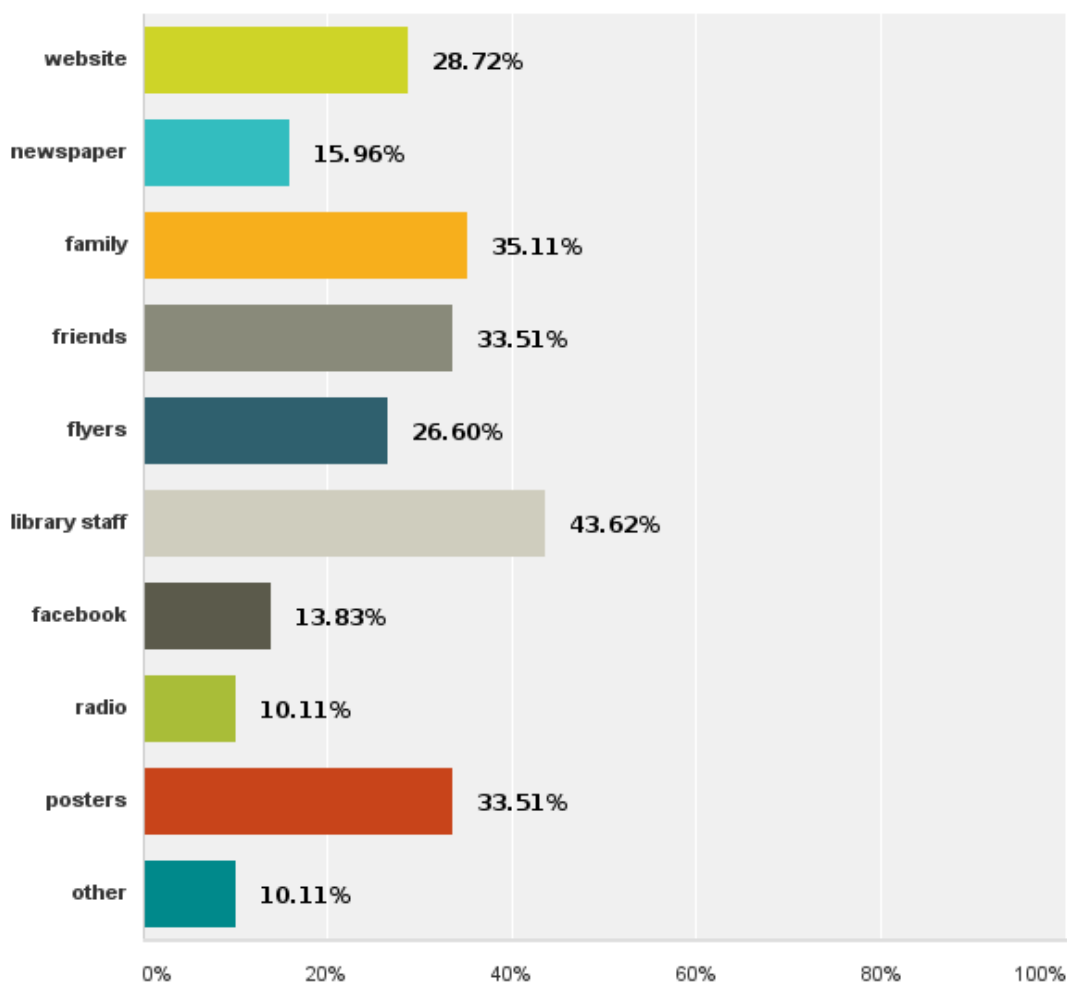
Answered: 151 Skipped: 52



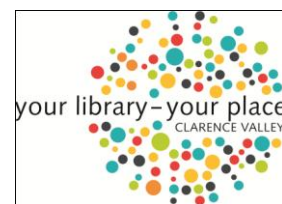
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### Q14 How do you find out about library activities and services?

Answered: 188 Skipped: 15



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## Comments and suggestions

There were many comments received in all surveys, which have been categorised as follows;

### Building

#### Likes

- The comfortable chairs
- It's a very comfortable environment
- It's a great place to study
- It's a cosy place with a lot of privacy and a good selection of items
- It's a quiet place full of knowledge and air-conditioning
- It's a nice quiet place I can come to read and study
- I can study for my assignments in it
- Its quiet – I know I can find a table to study at
- Comfy bean bags for the kids to read on
- It's a quiet area to hang
- It's a quiet place where you can relax, read and spend time with friends

#### Dislikes

- The lack of study tables
- The toilets are not clearly labelled
- The noise of the bathroom
- It could have more space
- It's a bit small
- The study areas always seem to be full of people
- Lack of amenities
- Doesn't have toilets
- Things are a little cramped, more space would be nice
- No quiet study space, need headphones
- So many stairs
- It's too small however this will be fixed when the new library opens
- Not having any toilets in the building
- Not enough comfy things to sit on (like bean bags)
- Not enough areas for sitting or study groups
- Too small – looking forward to new building

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## Suggestions

- more desks for study (x8)
- more room for study (x3)
- a designated quiet study area (x6)
- a study room with computers and desks
- a better bathroom function /toilets (x12)
- more power points for charging laptops (x2)
- food / a cafe (x9)
- a separate area for author / illustrator visits
- perhaps some quiet reading corner
- a nice comfortable reading room
- more comfortable chairs
- quiet reading area for my mum
- talking space
- language booth to listen to other language lessons on audio
- gaming space (x4)
- an outdoor 'garden' area
- a self serve checkout for books because sometimes there is a long wait
- bean bags / couches for teens to sit on and read / hang out in.
- possibly a counter to make tea / hot coffee for a small price (x2)
- rooms to book for study groups
- there is nothing I can think to change except a larger library so there can be more books
- Why is there another library being built?
- Open more jobs I.E. book finder to make it easier for people who struggle with a computer. And keep open minded – a 13 year old is as good as a 23 year old
- I hope the new library will be open all day on Saturday and have toilets, hand washing areas, more computers and a place to eat and drink.
- Photocopying and printing fees for school students should be a little cheaper
- It would be good to have a toilet, canteen and hand washing area for everyone

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## Opening Hours

### Dislikes

- That it's not open on Sundays
- Not open Wednesdays (x2)
- That it doesn't open until 10:00 – 9:00 or 9:30 would be great
- The fact that it doesn't open until 10AM and isn't open all day on Saturday
- Opening hours
- not open Sunday
- They close at 12 on Saturday, make it 2 or something
- The opening times on the weekends
- Not open on Mondays
- Not open all days especially in the holidays

### Suggestions

- I hope the new library will be open all day on Saturday and have toilets, hand washing areas, more computers and a place to eat and drink.
- longer opening hours please
- Opening time should be 9:00AM
- could open at 9AM – 5:30PM weekdays and 9AM – 12PM on Saturday
- it would be good to have the library opened on Wednesdays as well because seniors have Wednesday afternoons off
- open earlier
- library in Grafton needs to be open earlier
- it would be great if the library opened a little earlier on the weekdays
- would love for the library to open a little earlier
- Saturday opening hours are a bit short
- I think the library should open at 9:30 instead of 10:00
- Like it to be open earlier
- Would be good if the library was open on Mondays and longer on the weekends
- Saturday mornings in Maclean 2 hours is hard to get work done, so longer hours would make it a lot easier to do assignment work. Wednesday is also year 12's day off school so it makes it hard for them to use the resources on the days they have off school
- The 'closed for lunch' can be difficult to fit into study times
- Working almost fulltime makes it difficult for me to find time to go to the library. I would love to see it open longer hours on the weekend.
- Not Thursday to be closed



## Events / activities

### Likes

- The resources and events it offers (especially for younger kids during school holidays)
- Hospitality and willingness in holding functions (ie DnD Delves)

### Dislikes

- I don't really hear about any events that happen in the library

### Suggestions

- gaming events or outlets (x2)
- warhammer club (x3)
- a youth group
- beading workshop (x2)
- friendly and credible intellectual competitions
- song writing workshops
- photography or film making workshops
- disco's
- environmental talks
- author / illustrator talks (x3)
- more involvement with the aboriginal community and activities
- biscuit making, decorating biscuits
- face painting (x2)
- homework club
- live music
- Perhaps monthly story-writing contests?
- motivational speakers
- lessons on how to use different programs eg facebook, twitter etc
- HSC talks would be great
- Writing competitions / meeting authors. I want to be a writer so meeting someone who had written a novel might be able to help me strive to become better
- writing with authors
- art activities or creative writing
- support local music
- young adult book club
- some study groups or study advice
- lectures on University subjects
- More author talks!
- Need to advertise better so more people know what is happening in the libraries

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## Collections

### Likes

- the library has everything I love to read about
- The library has all the media types I see myself wishing to borrow.
- If the library doesn't have something, they get it in
- The range of books, especially the source material
- The variety of books and books are tracked down if you need them
- The study books (x4)
- Good range of books
- The comics / gaming magazines
- Fantasy books
- The great range of reading and reference material
- The excellent range of books
- Finding new books to enjoy
- The wide range of reading material. You can find information on almost anything
- I like the wide range of books and magazines in the library
- The fact that you can get books from other libraries delivered to your local library
- Wide range of books for study and leisure
- The resources that they have are HSC related
- The modern books they have gotten in
- I like being able to borrow DVDs
- A good variety of books to browse
- The amazing fitness DVDs
- 
- 

### Dislikes

- Lack of books teaching good morals and future skills
- JF is limited, boring, violent
- It doesn't have a wide variety of teen novels
- Limited comics
- No books or magazines on the WWE (World Wrestling Entertainment)
- Availability of sporting magazines, mainly soccer
- Labelling of book location, ie fiction and non-fiction
- They don't have motorbike magazines and they're my favourite
- There are not enough junior or young adult fiction books
- Not enough DVDs
- The choice of magazines
- Not enough star wars books

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## Suggestions

- more DVDs
- more signs about what each books genre is
- more magazines
- more teenage based DVDs
- more poetry would be nice
- could get in more education related resources as usually am looking for reference material
- school textbooks
- pc, wii, ds games (x6)
- more horror and zombie books
- educational studies related reference materials
- more anime (x2)
- classics (not in large print) and DVDs based on classics (Anna Karenina, Great Expectations, Sherlock Homes etc)
- more classic literature
- needs better range of well written classic literature
- country books / horses
- music cd's (x5)
- motorbike magazines
- bigger range of DVDs
- more romance books
- University guides
- a wider selection of comic books
- More HSC Excel books
- More comics (x4)
- get rid of all the violent books so children are not exposed to such poor quality books (x2)
- More books suited to teens. Some books (sports, science, nutrition) have now been outdated
- When space allows, separate the comics from the YAF. A separate stand for the comics draws the readers attention
- I've had trouble downloading audiobooks for internet
- Fictional novels are the main thing I focus on in the library. While the selection is good I feel it could be made better by completing a series rather than having a few books from the series
- Could do with a lot more new best-sellers
- There could be more junior and young adult fiction
- Sometimes the library doesn't have a book/magazine/DVD that I want but the advent of eBooks and emagazines could help to fill those gaps
- Maybe an online video streaming service sometime in the future could compliment the DVD collection
- The magazine choice is good but limited (there aren't any Cosmopolitan or women's health)
- The choice of DVDs could be more broad
- There doesn't seem to be much rotation in the books between the 3 branches. Would like to see more new books.
- The range of books is wonderful and there is a lot of educational material for study

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## Technology

### Likes

- The speed of the internet (x10)
- Easy to access wifi
- Wifi! (x many)
- Computer use (x16)
- Easy to access wifi and computers

### Dislikes

- That sometimes the computers are booked out
- When all the computers are taken to play games after school
- How slow the wifi is
- Hot everybody bludges on the computers
- Internet drops out and is slow

### Suggestions

- more computers (x7)
- gaming consoles
- private internet access – inappropriate material can be seen by young children
- more privacy at computers / maybe screens between computers
- access to ipads
- a library app or better advertising of an existing app
- more encouragement for people to visit the library website

**Staff**

## Likes

- What I like most about the library is the staff. They are very nice and helpful
- I love this library, the staff are wonderful
- The staff are always polite and friendly
- The staff is awesome
- Very good service by staff
- The library staff seem rather enjoyable to be around
- The staff are very tolerant and helpful
- The library staff is really good with superb service
- The staff are lovely
- The library staff are amazing and extremely kind and always willing to help
- Great staff
- The staff are always happy and helpful
- The staff are extremely helpful and friendly
- Staff are very helpful
- The library staff at Iluka library are very polite and nice
- Tiffany is always so welcoming and friendly
- The library staff are always friendly and nothing is too much for them
- The friendly staff, they treat me like family

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## General comments

### Likes

- The thing I like most about the library is you can borrow books to help you with school for free
- Like that you can borrow books for free (x many)
- I get time to study and chill out with friends
- great service and supplies
- thanks for the great resource
- The library is amazing and always has great facilities.
- this library seems like a really nice place to chill out and relax
- Everything is great!
- I love the library!
- Books are my life!
- thanks for giving me the choice to voice my opinion
- I would love to see the library become more youth friendly. Attracting a larger number of the Clarence Valley youth to attend and hire!
- I think the Clarence Valley library is amazing
- Bello library is great for students! The facilities are wonderful for homework but leisure resources could be added to
- I am really looking forward to the new library. I think that it will be a huge plus in the community and boost our knowledge and leisure time
- It is free, very easy to use the resources, quiet making for a good working environment and welcoming
- I like the quiet of the library and its excellent internet coverage
- Somewhere to hang out and not get in trouble
- I like the ease of finding what I'm looking for

### Dislikes

- It's too quiet
- The noise from other people
- Sometimes the noise
- Have to wait in a long queue to borrow a book
- You can't talk loud
- They need food
- Others phones ringing
- Having to return books so quickly is hard when you live out of town
- Needs more youth appeal

## To summarise and broadly respond

### Building:

Although the specific buildings referred to aren't identified, the comments often imply which library is being discussed.

The thing most liked about the library buildings are the provision of quiet space to study.

Conversely the least liked aspect of the buildings is the lack of space / study desks and toilet facilities. Particularly for the latter, it would be safe to assume this is a reference to the Grafton library which doesn't have an internal bathroom. This and the space / study desk situation will be rectified for Grafton users with construction of the new library.

Many building suggestions also followed this topic, with a high number suggesting more desks / space for study and more bathroom facilities. There were a number of suggestions for gaming areas, quiet reading areas and some form of cafe or canteen.

### Opening Hours

As would be expected, most dislikes and suggestions were for increased opening hours, but the opportunity to facilitate this is restricted by funding.

Most comments were asking for libraries to open earlier than 10:00am and for longer weekend opening hours. There were more specific days mentioned when the library is closed and these varied depending on the library, but with Wednesday being regularly mentioned – which would imply Maclean.

### Events / activities

The few (5.91%) who attend library events regularly showed an appreciation of these events and the willingness of the libraries to run them.

The range of suggestions for the types of events that could be run matched the results of question 21, with a quite even spread between recreational activities (craft workshops, gaming events etc) and educational events (author talks, HSC workshops, study groups). The number of respondents mentioning study related activities is probably a reflection of the fact that this survey was mostly completed by library users, but is also an encouraging indicator for the library support of HSC and study resources.

Interestingly there was one response that they 'don't really hear about any events that happen in the library, which hopefully will be rectified by further marketing.

### Collections

There were a large number of positive comments about the collection in general, noting the range of books and the fact that books can be obtained from other libraries. More specifically there was an appreciation of the study / reference / HSC titles and the different media types.

The negative comments referred to junior books of a violent nature, and a general shortage of junior and young adult fiction books. A reference to incomplete series titles is of interest as is the number of requests for specific items – ie comics, sporting magazines, motorbike magazines, star wars titles, WWE titles, teen DVDs, anime, classics and loanable games.

There were some useful suggestions such as separating comics from YAF, more book rotation between branches and quality literature / classics. This has recently been addressed with purchase of the classics collection and further purchase of HSC English texts.

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### Technology

There were many respondents who simply replied 'computers', 'internet' or 'wifi' to the question of 'what do you like most about the library?', although some more specifically referred to the speed of the internet and ease of access wifi as a positive.

The negative comments were mainly in relation to insufficient numbers of computers or computers being heavily occupied. In addition there were requests for gaming consoles and more computer privacy.

### Staff

There was an overwhelming positive response to the library staff, particularly noting their politeness, helpfulness, and friendliness. There were no negative comments or suggestions about library staff.

### General comments

Quite a few responses mentioned a number of aspects of the library (internet, collections, building) as one response and in general these were of a positive nature. The sense of safety and comfort from being in the library was certainly portrayed by these responses, although there was some conflict between those wanting more 'quiet' and those wishing to be able to make more noise (eg group study / talking). This has implications for providing zones within libraries where space allows.