



2018-19 Summary Report

Reporting period: 1 July 2018 – 31 June 2019

First 5 Forever is an initiative of the Queensland Government, coordinated by State Library of Queensland and delivered in partnership with local government. In the years since its launch in 2015, First 5 Forever has been successful in highlighting the importance of public libraries and Indigenous Knowledge Centres (IKCs) as important and trusted sources of early literacy support, and the value of enabling parents and caregivers to embrace their vital role in developing their child's literacy.



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 and managed through a new agreement. This report provides data on the 2018-2019 financial year which includes the first six months of the new [Service Level Agreement](#) (SLA) with participating local governments.

First 5 Forever celebrated at Coolum Library November 2018 with the Minister Leeanne Enoch

This agreement covers the period 1 January 2019 – 30 June 2021 and provides the 'business as usual' deliverables and obligations for First 5 Forever. This is the first time that all councils have operated under the same SLA with a more flexible model of delivery in response to feedback from councils, and alignment with the [Realising our Potential](#) Vision for Public Libraries released in June 2018.

At a glance 2018-19

100% of eligible councils in Queensland participating in First 5 Forever (74).

962,262 attendances at in-library First 5 Forever activities, up **4%** from previous year

First 5 Forever was represented at **3,754** outreach events (up 16%) with **130,087** estimated attendances at outreach events, down slightly by 2% from previous year

51 councils reporting participating in outreach events, up **19%** from 2018

68,539 resources distributed to families

1,546 partner organisations and agencies engaged with First 5 Forever, down **14%** from 2018

9 workshops were delivered in **4** locations plus **7** Webinar/Zoom sessions.

608 participants from **69** councils attended professional development opportunities.

9772 First 5 Forever Facebook page followers

73,421 page views on the First 5 Forever website.



Collated evidence of First 5 Forever against core deliverables in 2018-19

1. Increasing access to early literacy experiences

In 2018-19 **36,932** in-library sessions took place across the library network with **962,262** attendances reported at in-library First 5 Forever activities (a **24%** increase in the number of sessions and **4%** increase in attendances from 2017-18). Emphasis has shifted this year from a focus on outreach events to a more significant growth in the number of in-library sessions. This could indicate that the new “business as usual” model is being incorporated into regular library programming with the securing of ongoing state government funding. |



Councils reported an increase in both sessions and steady growth in attendances for the reporting period across all sessions. This is a measure of success for First 5 Forever outreach and promotion to new and existing local families, as the birth rate in Queensland has remained very steady during the reporting period with [less than 1% change](#) between each year from 2017-2019.

2. Reaching all families with children aged 0-5



In 2018-19, libraries collectively ran or participated in **3,754** outreach sessions (**16%** increase) and reported **130,087** attendances. Attendances at outreach events have decreased slightly from the previous year by **2%**.

The increase in sessions can be attributed to more councils engaging in outreach with **51 councils** (an increase of **19%**) reporting engaging in some form of outreach activity focussing on early literacy. This is **69%** of all participating Queensland councils, and provides a greater geographic coverage for non library users to access First 5 Forever opportunities outside of libraries and IKCs.

It is also important to note that these councils include an increase in participation from RLQs and 3 ICs (37%) It is a significant undertaking for smaller libraries to be able to allocate staff and program outside of standard library programming to engage in outreach so it is positive to see that councils can see the value in supporting such events.

See the [blog post from Lockyer Valley Regional Council](#) on their First 5 Forever park pathways (pictured) and the [video from Sunshine Coast Regional Council](#) on their popular park story walks to learn more about how libraries are being creative with outreach and linking to where families are.



Outreach sessions include both regularly scheduled sessions held in public areas hosted by library staff and participation in community-based family friendly events. Pop up library programs have continued to be popular in 2018-19 and the scaleable “pop up” First 5 Forever presence is now a valuable part of community outreach all over Queensland. Swimming pools, local agricultural shows, shopping centres, NAIDOC week and waiting rooms are all places where you can continue find First 5 Forever in Queensland.



Resources: State Library has continued to support councils through the creation of resources to the Dropbox for local applications including tip sheets on resources and books, plus a new bookmark design to be used for outreach. Some councils continued to use First 5 Forever packs to support engagement with families or as part of a reward card scheme. For example, Brisbane City Council has continued to incorporate First 5 Forever into their existing Little Stars holiday reading campaign.



Examples of how First 5 Forever is being promoted through packs, events and loyalty cards



3. Collaborative partnerships and coordination

In 2018-19 public libraries and IKCs reported partnering with **1,546** community partners which is a **14%** decrease from the previous year. This decrease can be explained as the number of partners reported in the previous year doubled, so this decrease would be the reality of some of these new partnerships not continuing so that councils can focus their resources on those that are creating the best outcomes and meeting mutual KPIs for organisations working with local families.



First 5 Forever funding continues to provide libraries with the opportunity to connect with local steering groups, businesses and organisations and develop partnerships that extend the reach of libraries with families. It also provides multiple connection points for key early literacy messages to be shared with families over time, and opportunities for libraries to leverage additional in-kind support for programs. For example, Ipswich Libraries reported nearly \$12,000 in in-kind support from 13 community partners.



Examples of partnerships include: HIPPY in Bundaberg (pictured), Bunnings in Ipswich, North Queensland Bulk Ports Coop in Whitsunday and Townsville Hospital and Health Service now broadcasting the First 5 Forever 'Little Moments, Big Impact' video on their free-to-air Mums TV educational channel. Reports provide extensive success stories of partnerships leading to new families attending First 5 Forever sessions and linking into libraries.

4. Family and community awareness campaign

The First 5 Forever Facebook website generated 43,259 visits and 73,421 page views. This page was supported through the dedicated First 5 Forever Facebook page which had 9,778 followers by June 2019 (**30%** increase).

Subscribers to First 5 Forever emails for parents and caregivers grew from 900 from 1 July 2018 to almost **5,000** subscribers as at 30 June 2019. Almost **300** television, radio, online news and blog articles specifically talked about First 5 Forever.



In March 2019, State Library released their latest video *A great start in life starts with you* (pictured above) with feedback indicating that video content on social media provides councils with much needed content to support their local programs. The video focuses on the important link from library programs to home interaction and reinforced the value for families in investing in their child's future through talking, reading, singing and playing. The mp4 file is available on the [Dropbox](#) for downloading or sharable from the source on [Facebook](#) or [Youtube](#). This video, to date, has a reach of 27K on Facebook and has been viewed over 550K times on YouTube.

State Library has promoted the work of councils through our social media channels, such as the Tablelands [Barramundi Rhyme](#) (which is still popular with 52K views and 528 shares to date) and has inspired imitations from Sunshine Coast and Noosa.



Plus: Queensland councils continue to be highly active using their own media releases / social media channels and local campaigns to promote First 5 Forever and target local families.

First 5 Forever branding has appeared on footpaths, cinema advertising, 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 2018-19, **9 workshops** were delivered in **four locations**, Gold Coast, Cairns, South Burnett and Toowoomba. In addition, **7** webinars and Zoom presentations were delivered providing an opportunity for regional participation when travel opportunities are limited and/or the ability for a library team to access professional development outside of opening hours.

State Library also delivered the *Talk, Read, Sing, Play, Share!* Forum in October 2018 for council staff with responsibility for delivering First 5 Forever which was attended by 58 participants from 25 councils.

In total, **608 participants** representing **69 regional councils** participated in professional development and this included library staff, community development officers, marketing staff and branch coordinators/managers.

Staff are also supported through a fortnightly Professional Delivery tip emailed directly to subscribers in response to library feedback requesting “bite size” First 5 Forever strategies and ideas that can easily be incorporated directly into programs to keep deliveries refreshed for regular participants. Council staff can also access the First 5 Forever Professional Network Facebook page for advice and sharing of solutions and successful programs, which had over 300 members by June 2019.

Professional development workshops and webinars in 2018-19 focussed on the business as usual model with additional content on the value of play based resources to support the emphasis on play in the upcoming 2019-20 First 5 Forever Community Literacy Project delivery of *Libraries as play based spaces*



State Library staff member Megan Scully delivering a play based First 5 Forever workshop in Cairns

Indigenous Knowledge Centre highlights

From 2019, Queensland Councils that operate an Indigenous Knowledge Centre were highly visible in promoting the Year of Indigenous Languages through highlighting their ongoing First 5 Forever language rich programs.

In November 2018, First 5 Forever was featured with a half day workshop at the Indigenous Knowledge Centre Coordinators Conference held in Cairns with 40 participants. At this session IKC coordinators were encouraged to showcase their work with families of children aged 0-5.



Included in the program were Torres Strait Island Regional Council who presented on *Singing Strait Style: Recording nursery rhymes in Torres Strait Languages* and Shirley Costello, Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council on sharing rhymes in language as part of her regular radio program (above). Mavis Bani from Torres Shire Council also notably shared a familiar children's rhyme in the Torres Strait's Mabuiag language which was [recorded](#) and shared as a wonderful example of promoting Indigenous languages.



This was also an opportunity to work directly with IKC coordinators as part of the consultation process for managing the six month *First 5 Forever Grant Agreement to all Councils with an IKC Service* as part of the realignment for all Queensland councils to the new First 5 Forever funding agreement commencing on 1 January 2019.

First 5 Forever funding was made available to supply resources that aligned with the *Talk, Play, Sing, Read* message supporting early literacy directly to IKCs. Through consultation with State Library, IKC coordinators ordered a range of robust, play based, early literacy resources particular to each location to make the IKC a central play based space in the community. These resources are now an established offer at each IKC and also used during outreach to attract families to visit the IKC and access IKC resources and collections.



State Library of Queensland looks forward to continuing to work in partnership with public libraries and Indigenous Knowledge centres to deliver First 5 Forever to Queensland families in 2018-19. Thank you to all council staff, community partners and local champions who have contributed to the ongoing success of this program.



First 5 Forever now being delivered across Queensland through libraries in communities as small as Injune (population 461)