

# Wellington City Libraries annual survey 2011

*“Libraries are important  
community places.”*

*“The library is an important  
community service for all walks of  
life.”*

*“The public library helps glue a  
community together.”*

*“The Wellington City Council’s  
library service is an essential part  
of what makes Wellington a great  
little capital city.”*

*“Libraries are an important  
community asset.”*

*“Libraries are essential to the  
wellbeing of the community.”*

*“Libraries are a vital part of the  
community.”*

*“Libraries are the social mirror  
of our society.”*

*“Libraries are important to  
families with children, and the  
elderly.”*

**Summary report**

## Introduction

The first annual Wellington City Library (WCL) survey was distributed in October 2011, both via email and hard copy. The survey had a number of objectives, including: ascertain usage of specific WCL resources, services and programmes; measure user satisfaction with a range of WCL resources, services and programmes; identify possible areas for improvement, and; identify customer priorities for WCLs for the next 12 months. The survey covered a number of key areas of the library service, including: usage, access, physical resources, digital resources, services, customer service, and programmes. There was also a special focus on the health collection in 2011.

The online survey was sent to a random sample of library members, consisting of both Wellington City residents, and residents of the wider Wellington region. The final sample consisted of 1,919 respondents, of which 456 surveys were completed, producing a response rate of 24%.

A limited number of hard copy surveys were also made available in all the Wellington City Library branches during the survey period. Of the 250 surveys made available, 123 were completed and returned, producing a return rate of 49%.

All respondents who completed the survey (both online and hard copy) were eligible for entry into a prize draw, consisting of the chance to win one of ten \$50 supermarket vouchers. The winners were drawn once the survey closed, and subsequently notified.

Although both surveys contained identical questions, a separate analysis of both survey modes was undertaken to address any differences between the survey modes (for instance, the online survey used automatic settings, whereas the hard copy version was contingent on respondents following the instructions correctly). A limited number of cross tabulations was undertaken, alongside some limited aggregation of averages across both survey modes for some questions.

A summary of the key findings is provided below.

## Usage and access

The main reasons why respondents are not visiting WCLs more frequently are: no need (37%), find information online (37%), and buy own books/magazines (22%).

In the last 12 months, 52% of both HC and online respondents indicated that they usually visited the Central library.

Some respondents reported that there were difficulties finding a quiet space, particularly at some of the branch libraries. This appears to be primarily an issue of spatial design.

***"I think Wellington City Council's library service is an essential part of what makes Wellington a great little capital city."***

***"Emphasise greater awareness of overall peaceful atmosphere for study, and less on being a place for social interaction by some, who may be in fact inhibiting others who just want to quietly learn."***

***"Keep branch libraries going. They are important, especially for older people who can't get into the city easily."***

The frequency of visits over the last 12 months have not changed for over half of respondents, with 85% of hard copy (HC) survey respondents visiting either daily, weekly or fortnightly, and 60% of online respondents visiting either monthly or a few times a year.

While weekdays during business hours (9am-5pm) was the most convenient opening hours option for most respondents, some indicated that increasing hours at weekends and evenings would facilitate greater access to WCLs.

## Physical collection

In the last 12 months, the three most popularly used collections were fiction (74%), DVDs (40%) and magazines (38%). All three also scored the highest satisfaction levels for specific collections.

Over 80% of respondents were satisfied with the overall range of the library collection.

86% of online and 89% of HC respondents reported that they were satisfied with WCL's overall lending conditions.

***"I think the book collection is the heart of the library. It is excellent and should be maintained at least at its current standard and not sacrificed for other resources."***

***The library needs to update [the] stock of books and keep in line with what the everyday person wants. Look how long it took you to get Mills and Boon, but how popular it is."***

Most respondents considered the cost of borrowing magazines and CDs reasonable. However, the cost of borrowing DVDs for adults (20% online, 25% HC) and boxed DVDs (18% online, 30% HC) was considered unreasonable by some respondents, particularly given the quality of the DVDs being borrowed.

Over 85% of respondents were satisfied with the lending periods for books, although the lending period for bestseller books was considered less satisfactory.

## Digital collection

Over 95% of respondents across both survey modes have access to computers and the internet at home.

It is worth noting that online resources were more likely to be accessed from home, especially amongst online respondents (67%).

Most respondents use the internet to find information (85%) and for making online transactions, such as online banking and shopping (71%).

***"...the future of the library surely depends on future use and so the priority for you is meeting the demands of the younger users, and I'm sure this depends more upon modern technology to communicate to this market. Just keep some books and magazine versions for us older people."***

***"We'd like a greater selection of ebook fiction, non-fiction and children's and early teenage and audiobooks online. Our children have read pretty much all the young teen ebooks. We'd like to see more bestseller or recent fiction available online."***

There is an opportunity to improve both performance in the usage of, and satisfaction with, ebooks and audiobooks. Suggested improvements included: extending the range of ebooks and audiobooks available, and increasing the ebook formats that are available.

Some respondents suggested that WCL website could be made more user friendly, and improved web services (especially around online account services) should be provided.

## Library services and programmes

Checking customer accounts online was the most popularly accessed library service in the last 12 months.

Respondents were more likely to indicate that the cost of adults reserving items (28% online and 36% HC) and the cost of adult book overdues (27% online, 37% HC) were unreasonable.

Most respondents had not attended a WCL programme in the last 12 months, but over 80% of those who did, were satisfied with the range of programmes offered.

***"To be honest, although I regularly use the library, I haven't heard much about the programmes or events on offer."***

***"I enjoy what's on offer for children – they are always good to attend."***

***"More craft and including patrons, like Tawa's Peggy squares for refugees. We in the community felt great helping in a small way, and the youth got involved and learnt a new craft to them, and the old patrons felts good [passing] on skills."***

Over 90% of respondents were satisfied with library services overall.

Respondents expressed interest in attending a range of skills-based programmes, as well as guest speaker/public talks. Increasing awareness of WCL programmes is one area where improvements could be made.

81% of online and 85% of HC respondents indicated that the cost of providing library services in Wellington City (an average of \$109.01 per resident per year) represents good value for money.

## Customer service

Over 80% of respondents reported that they found staff friendly and approachable (90% online, 88% HC), competent (92% online, 91% HC), and available when needed (84% online, 84% HC).

Email was the most preferred method for WCLs to communicate information about their programmes and services (83% online, 62% HC).

Email was the most preferred method for WCLs to communicate information about user accounts to respondents (73% online, 61% HC).

***“Make explicit [the] full range of services offered. There are some great services – do people know about them? I didn’t!”***

***“This survey has shown me how little I know of what the library offers, despite being a regular user. There are probably lots of people like me.”***

***“Be proactive – need to remind people that libraries provide a wonderful community service, before they all turn to [the] internet and ebooks.”***

Some respondents indicated that training library staff in basic IT and technology products would enable staff to assist and teach library users how to use the computers/digital library resources. This in turn could increase usage of the WCL's digital products.

Greater promotion of WCL services was identified as a key area where WCLs can make improvements. For some respondents, knowledge of what WCL offers was very low, even amongst regular users.

## Health collection

Between 40% -60% of respondents needed to find health information in the last 12 months.

Usage of the health collection in the last 12 months was low (12% online, 26% HC), but satisfaction with the collection was reasonably high (79% online 71% HC).

Most respondents either used the internet (98% online, 83% HC) or visited a health professional (59% online, 84% HC) to access health information.

Awareness of the health databases was very low, with only 9% of online and 16% of HC respondents aware.

***“Would have been good to know you had [health] databases, so more marketing on this would be helpful.”***

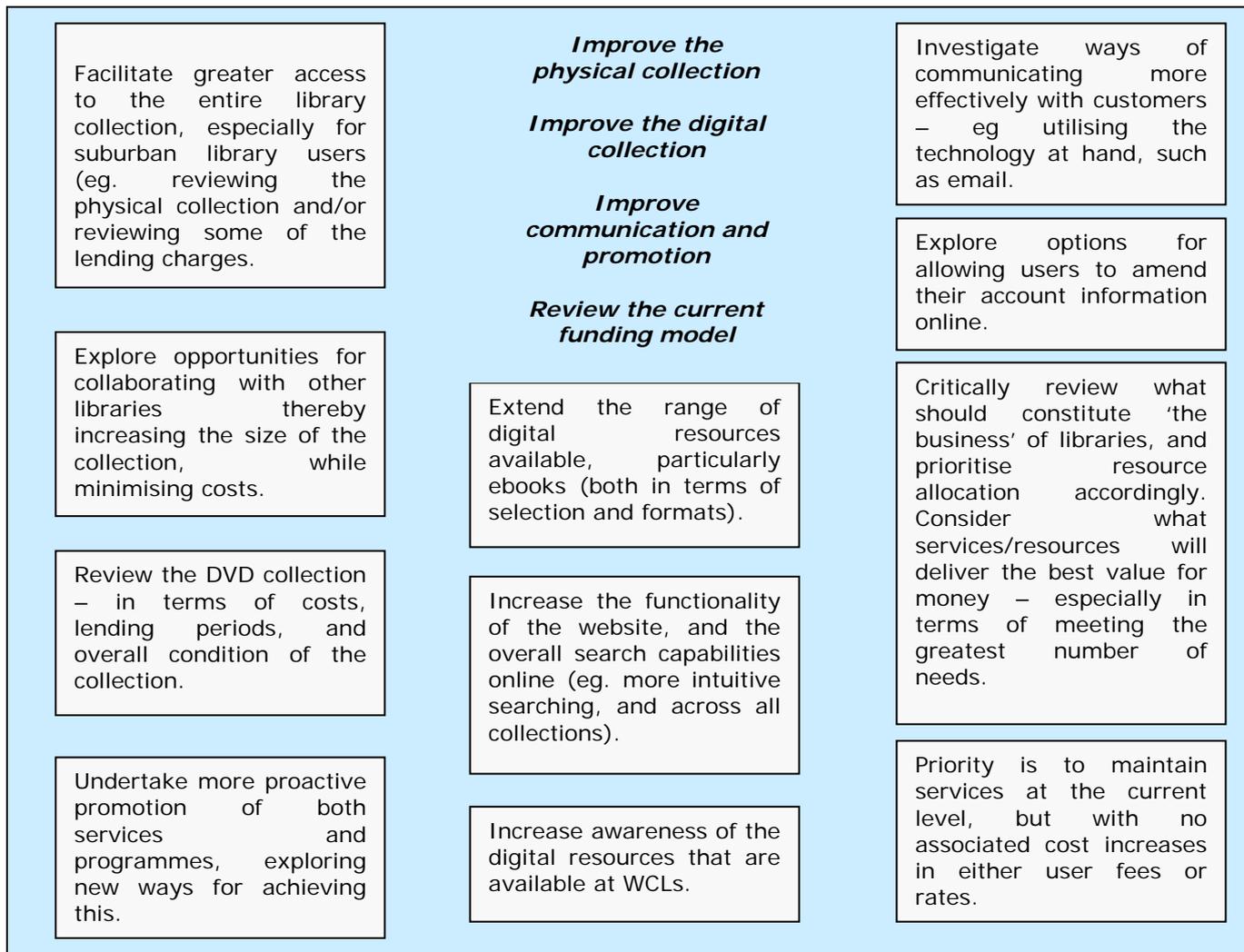
***“This is the first I had heard of the health database. I would probably use it if I knew what information or benefit I could get from it.”***

***“[Providing] online information would be best, as it is most current, but ensuring private access is essential.”***

Most respondents indicated that they would use the internet (73% online 43% HC) or a health professional (30% online, 50% HC) to access health information in the future, whereas using books from the library was the least preferred source for finding health information in the future (7% online, 15% HC).

The two key areas where respondents indicated improvements could be made revolved around increasing awareness of, and improving, existing health information resources.

## Priority areas for improvement



## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information about Wellington City Libraries, please contact John Stears at [john.stears@wcc.govt.nz](mailto:john.stears@wcc.govt.nz) or Joanne Horner at [joanne.horner@wcc.govt.nz](mailto:joanne.horner@wcc.govt.nz)