

# Outcomes & Notes

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Here is the debrief document written by Deception Bay Library

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## Full text:

### Reflections from Deception Bay Library

At the initial stages of consultation with The Edge, it was very clear that this project would need supporting partners/stakeholders from the broader community. So, we reached out to agencies such as: Deception Bay Community & Youth Programs, Flexible Learning School in the area and Outreach Workers. We then formed a "Steering Group" to lead and frame up the project with The Edge represented as well. This steering group was vital to the success of the project delivery in Deception Bay, as it allowed for timely identification of timelines events and resource sharing. We were able to work within a collaborative framework to set event/project objectives and identify desired outcomes, reviewing these and making alterations as we moved through the project timeline. Deception Bay has a network already in place for this, so putting this structure in place around the project was relatively seamless. The biggest hurdle here was juggling workloads and calendars already in place and delivering the OLA project within the given timelines. This is where the Steering Group assisted in keep everyone on track and making it easy to step in and help when needed.

DBCYP had a readymade Events team of students currently studying a Certificate in Event Management. We could utilise this core group of students and make the project part of their curriculum, which gave DBCYP reportable outcomes for their organisation as well as providing operational and delivery support to sections of the project.

This foundational work allows people to play to their strengths and therefore makes the deliverables for each organisation both achievable and meaningful. Something that is important as we were hoping to gain a sustainable program offering on the back of this engagement.

Before a calendar of events could be established we had to secure a 'buy in' from the youth that would be participating. We went about this in 2 ways; firstly, we approached the Flexible Learning Schools in our local area to gauge their interest in attending some sessions. We then had to discuss what those sessions would be and look like - how they would be a 'value added' session that supported the School's curriculum and would engage the kids. This exercise seemed to take the longest to set up, but once the contacts had been established things developed very well. The second group that we approached were the local community youth that frequented the library on occasion. We put up posters and talked to them all about the types of events and that it would be running each week with Pizza!

We found that in the initial events the promise of Pizza was very important in establishing a core group of kids, but that once we were a few weeks into the schedule the food offering became secondary to the social and learning aspects of the events. But the Pizza is definitely an initial draw-card for the first couple.

So, now we had a Steering Group to set the agenda and lead the way, a group of workplace students to help operationally with delivering the events and participation from one of the local Flexi schools and also our local community youth.

The timelines and events were then discussed and decided on, as were some skills session at The Edge to experience some of the technology available like the 3D printing and laser cutting. These sessions were selected because the Library service could support a program offering of a scaled down version back in a local library setting – so the synergies and sustainability were transparent.

We delivered some programming off site at the Flexi School, but the majority of events were held at the Deception Bay Library: during school hours for the Flexi School, and in the 4pm – 6pm timeslot on a weekday for the local youth. This allowed us to build some consistency around the programming and we found that posters and regular conversations were enough to build a good participation level each week.

The steering group met every 2 weeks to review the project and ensure that we were on track to complete the project within the timelines. There was lots of work in between meetings preparing for the upcoming events, particularly for the final celebration event.

The Library was able to achieve a definitive outcome from this project around its young adult presence. We are now looking at running a weekly teen/tween club with the core group of 4 participants being from this project. Additionally, we have interest from one of the Flexi School participants interested in feeding back into this group as a volunteer helper each week. So these outcomes speak to both sustainability of the project, and also capacity building of our youth.

We also found that the project produced some interesting results in terms of the involvement from other family members. Some parents began coming with their children and were very engaged in the weekly sessions and conversations that occurred within the sessions around the imbedded Apocalypse Theme – change, renewal, rebirth etc. These parents felt these sessions meaningful to them as they allowed a neutral and safe space to engage in transitional conversations around some difficult topic such as: school, peer groups, bullying etc. As well as an inclusive space to simply enjoy the company of others. These outcomes for a library service are very special as they make the Library a relevant place in the lives of our community members. It creates a sense of ownership and belonging, which has enriched the lives of these participants on many levels. The library is now one of their favourite places to go, where as prior to the project it was just a place that they were aware of.

## **Here are the notes and quotes from the debrief session:**

### **Outcomes for the library:**

The library has been approached by the artist that won the Edmund Rice Award for her mural to volunteer at the library on a Tuesday night for the book club program in 2018. Her connection to the library has now given her some job pathways. She didn't know libraries did this kind of thing. Not only an outlet for her creativity and some partnerships that she's made in the community, it's really given her some vocational choices as well. The library has provided some experiences for leisure, learning and job choices.

They have found the tween age group to be difficult to engage. They lose young people engaging in

the library at a very young age in Deception Bay. They lose them at about 9/10 years old. Having this program and having all of that support in terms of activating that space on a Tuesday and having something vibrant and meaningful to them happening in the library has really meant that they have been able to attract the 11 to 14 age group to the point now that they are going to be able to run a sustainable activity for that age group in 2018.

They discovered that the element of music is important for this age group during the songs and lyrics book club. This book club was a real epiphany for the library and changed how they thought about running activities and changed the way that they interacted with the young people. They discovered that the young people in the region are not what they present themselves to be. The depth of the interactions was eye opening. Young people were empowered. It was not a scholastic environment. They were turning their brains on and learning at the book club events.

The library got a sustainable outcome out of the book club model. The Flexi School partnership looks like it will continue. They have been challenging to break into in the past. Flexi now see the library as having some worth in what they are trying to do and that a partnership is worthwhile.

Really surprising things for the library has been all of the layers to what they have been doing throughout OLA. It hasn't just been just about doing (eg about making masks or 3D printing or the comic books). This process has been so valuable for us. It has made us connect with our community. Libraries are probably on a transitional journey at the moment and staff needs to know that it is OK to break away from transactional behaviour. The important stuff is the engagements with individuals. Making the staff feel it is OK to stop and have that engagement.

3D printing PD with The Edge: doing 3D printing workshop helped a librarian give advice and feedback to the regional manager in charge of the 3D printers in the Moreton bay region.

### **Challenges:**

The book club series got bigger. They had to run something every week because kids were showing up. The young people wanted to engage and come along. The library picked up on the momentum of this. Resources of staffing were the biggest challenge. The Deception Bay Library is a 3 person branch. They had no idea that it was going to be as big and as successful as it was in terms of participation and it really did take more than one staff member to be involved as it was all around the conversation. Small group interactions were the most meaningful for the young people.

In small and intimate groups everybody feels more comfortable and they feel as though they are able to talk and would not be judged or not be spoken over or competing. It was challenging to have staffing resources for that. They had extra library support services, The Edge as well as DBCYP which really helped with the success.

Personal stories came up in book club. There are now more connections with the staff and the library space. The library is now seen as a space that has meaning for these young people.

Creating relationships is the most important. Moreton Bay region expressed that they want to apply OLA to the region by offering aspects to other branches to choose for 2018.

### **CCC program:**

The library will pick this up in Feb 2018. They would like to partner with the High School. Working with

a group that need to stay engaged. Year 9 is a potential year as they tend to get lost and may drop out. CC could offer a different learning environment for this age group. There is an initial interest from the High School to do this. They like the idea of affecting some change in these young people's lives.

### **DEBRIEF WITH THE STEERING GROUP IN DECEPTION BAY**

#### **Book club:**

A mum at a book club:

*"this has been the best for me I've been in counselling I've got heaps of things going on and being here you just get to sit and be creative and it's so great."*

this mum kept coming. She was a consistent person. PCYC wasn't a fit for her child, the bookclub gave him a free flowing creative outlet for him. Less structured. She wanted to volunteer to keep it going. Her child has issues at school with his peers getting bullied. Not wanting to go to school because of all of that. He was so excited about his report card recently that he brought it in to show the librarians at the library. His mum says that he is excited to go to school on Monday now because the following day is Tuesday and he gets to come to the library! Her child knows that the library staff cares. The book club that has been run in Deception Bay Library has had a significant impact on this family's life.

Gail:

*"There were not many numbers at the comic book club but it was incredibly rich. The children were telling me how to do it. It gave them a chance to use their knowledge. It was a shared experience. "*

#### **Outreach with Edmund Rice Flexi School:**

The relationship with the local Flexi school has expanded: The library only had one relationship with one teacher in the school. Now the library have four contacts within the school and feel that they can easily call them. At the beginning the library nearly pulled the pin because the Flexi School wasn't coming on board. Knowing where you should invest your time and energy into is very important. With schools and community groups. One of the young people who did a mural as a part of the OLA process came to the final event. After the event she reached out to the library to volunteer at the library.

#### **Outreach: DBCYP:**

Trainee program worked on events. There were times of confusion for the trainees. About who was in charge. Trainees felt that their input wasn't taken on board at times.

*"The trainees were absolutely vital for the success of the program. I don't think we could have delivered on anywhere near what we were able to without that crew behind us. They need to understand that what they brought to the table was significant, definitely." (librarian)*

Moving forward if trainees were involved again the steering group sees the need to break it down a lot more and get the trainees to be more a part of the process with DBCYP being clearly in the role as supervisors and more clear parameters. Trainees were learning skills that will be useful in a community perspective they may be useful in a volunteer perspective for understanding the value that their volunteering work can bring to the community as a whole. If they want to get that sort of

community event up and running they've learnt skills to do it but they've actually got some capacity to unpack why you would do that.

**Having a steering group:** In the planning stages it was a steering group environment and collectively made decisions that were run with. If it is an event at the library then the library took the lead on that event. In terms of planning and discussions, the library was comfortable with it being collaborative. We often assume stuff so maybe for our trainees it was confusing for them. It would be valuable for trainees as well as communities that haven't done this kind of work. We assume stuff because we have worked with each other before. Partnership training - you think about what your relationship is - cooperative, collaborative, networking, information exchange. You may see that you see each other differently. You may not have the same understanding.

**Relationships:** The Edge project showed the importance of relationships. Deception Bay knows the structure of who fits where within a cultural and community services support setting. For other communities to do OLA you would need to find out what that is in your community. Unless you have relationships that take you down to that level of knowing it will not work.

**OLA Final Event:** at the event there were still people who were here that just happened to be here. They were really happy to be here. It doesn't matter what you do. Just the walk by element is still there. You see how worthwhile the library is. Maybe there will be something happening when I come to the library next time.

**At the beginning of the project:** These were the ideas that the group felt would help with the roll out for next time:

Do some culture mapping at the beginning - it is worth it to evaluate it and chat about before beginning. To see if there are any new opportunities or gaps since last time you checked in. Even when you have strong relationships you don't always understand the constraints that the person is working under. We are all signing different contracts and our outcomes change.

**Apocalypse as a theme:** Many wrestled with getting their head around the theme. Would it have been useful to have a workshop about the theme and some images? Is it a theme that is too challenging to get your head around? Maybe an easier theme? It was difficult. Generated by the group maybe? The group came to the conclusion that it is meant to be difficult, thought provoking, to elicit conversation and ideas. You can always fall back on zombies. Sometimes people get frustrated and want to be told what to do! There is something about sitting with people and supporting people to sit with that discomfort of not necessarily knowing. For some people they are OK with that and other people are really confronted. Giving space for self-reflection is really important.

**After OLA:** The group now sees it as the time that the community can pick it up and choose their own concept. They can now answer the question "What are we going to explore now". It was important to have a theme to begin with as well as a time frame to work within. Now, after having done it, the library can open it up for input.