# Beyond the Books:

## Cultural Value and the
## State Library of South Australia

by

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# SUMMARY

The question of how to value culture has concerned the international cultural sector for decades. Despite extensive research and debate in academic and policy circles, few practical advances have been made to improve the evaluation of the contribution the sector makes at both a community and individual level. Previous studies on the public value of arts and culture identify the need to resist the application of quantitative methods and transactional terms developed for the commercial realm. These standardised modelling practices are based on economic principles that abrade and sometimes contradict the goals and services offered by the cultural sector. Cultural institutions struggle to communicate what they do in a policy environment dominated by austerity narratives and economic impact measures. They face on-going budget cuts and pressure to deliver instrumental outcomes, on top of their missions to preserve, interpret and maintain access to their collections. The problem of their public value is caught between conflicts of ideology and methodology.

This thesis takes a qualitative mixed-methods approach to identify the public value of the State Library of South Australia. Drawing on literature from arts marketing, economics and cultural value research, it forms a case study for Laboratory Adelaide, an Australian Research Council Linkage project investigating the value of culture. The thesis takes up the recommendations of Holden (2004, 2007), Radbourne et. al. (2013), Scott (2017), Walmsley (2013, 2016) and others, to focus on the perspective of the public, to identify how the value of a cultural institution is perceived and made manifest. Data was captured using open-ended surveys and semi-structured interviews, and is communicated in the public's natural language, using narrative techniques. This is the first time a cultural value analysis has been conducted on South Australia's oldest post-settlement cultural institution. The State Library's history and location within the North Terrace Cultural Precinct are shown to be significant, underpinning the public's valued relationship with the institution. As a politically neutral civic space, the State Library is shown to be a point of entry for new arrivals to Adelaide and Australia, providing language classes, community connections and cultural transfer. The importance of positive childhood experiences is shown to support how adults become life-long library users and informed citizens. The findings contribute to knowledge by highlighting the symbolic interaction between the institution and members of the public, that create transgenerational associations of value and fulfil the potential of individuals while promoting social cohesion, community identity, trust and belonging. These narratives of value provide important qualitative context to balance mandatory quantitative evaluation policy demands.

# DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis:

1. does not incorporate without acknowledgment any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and

2. to the best of my knowledge and belief, does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Signature:

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# PART ONE:

**METHODS AND APPROACH**

# 1 INTRODUCTION – APPETITE FOR INSTRUCTION

Humans are a cultural species. Boyd and Richerson attribute our success to our ability to learn both socially and genetically: socially by the application of symbols and languages from others to transfer advantageous knowledge; and genetically via inherited cognitive mechanisms and behavioural patterns which enable us to communicate and make sense of what we receive:

> Culture is as much a part of human biology as our peculiar pelvis […] Beginning early in human ontogeny, our psychology allows us to learn from others, powerfully and unconsciously motivates us to do so, and shapes the kind of traits that evolve (Boyd & Richerson 2011, p. 10924)

Learning through family groups and community members (or 'kin selection effects'), is a process described by Mullon and Lehman as 'gene-culture co-evolution' (2017, p. 33). Building on Watson's suggestion that 'people construct narratives and narratives construct people', one may imply that humans are the ultimate narrative constructions, informed by knowledge transfer through social interaction, as well as inherited behaviours and cognitive capacity allowing stories to be told about and amongst ourselves, our communities and our ancestors, to gain advantage (2006, p. 510). Collectively, these processes and capabilities have ensured our survival. Graced with a legacy of learned and lived understanding, we live on (if we're lucky) to retell stories, build upon the knowledge and discoveries made by our predecessors, improve on it with what we learn. Thus, we adapt to the circumstances of the world as we find it, so as to pass it on to the next generation.

Boyd and Richerson described culture as the principal mechanism through which didactic narratives are transferred from one generation to another 'via teaching and imitation, of knowledge, values and other factors that influence behaviour' (1985, p. 2). Cultural transmission may be supported by various structures, which Boyd and Richerson describe as 'patterns of socialization by which a given trait or set of traits are transmitted in a given society' (1985, p. 2). For centuries in Great Britain, this regulatory function was fulfilled by institutions such as the Church, instilling what North describes as 'the rules of the game in society, or … the humanly devised constraints that shape human interaction' (1990, p. 3). By the turn of the nineteenth century, within Great Britain's crowded new urban industrial centres, this role was also filled in part by libraries. When planning a new colony on the south eastern shores of Australia, consideration was given to supporting the cultural life and transfer of institutions for the

enterprising colonists. As Paquette suggests in regard to the formation of colonial capitals, 'the construction of cultural life is crucial in engineered cities' (2019, 4.1.1).

The State Library of South Australia is situated on the unceded lands of the Kaurna people, the traditional owners of the Adelaide Plains, and continues as a significant site of cultural practice and exchange, as has occurred for tens of thousands of years. The pre-colonial significance of the site is discussed by Draper (2015) and Nettlebeck (2019) who describe the Indigenous heritage of the Torrens River banks as a hunting and meeting ground for the Kaurna people who, though physically displaced by colonial settlement, continue to maintain their deep spiritual connections to the land. Visitors today are reminded of the survival of Kaurna cultural practices as they enter the State Library, via an artwork carved into the pavement, featuring words of welcome from Kaurna Elder, Lewis O'Brien:

> *Munara ngai wanggandi marni na budni Kaurna yertaanna, worttangga marni na budni*
> *State Library of South Australia. Ngaityo yungandalya ngaityo yakkanandalga padliadlu*
> *wadu.*
> (Translation: First I welcome you all to my Kaurna country, and next I welcome you to the
> State Library of South Australia. My brothers, my sisters, let's walk together in harmony).[1]

The English colonists intending to migrate to South Australia began collecting books for a library two years before they left England in February 1836. Born of Enlightenment ideals and the utilitarian belief in mutual improvement, the institution that would become the State Library is inextricably linked to the history and development of South Australia and its diverse community. This history shared by the institution and its public has created an ongoing relationship of memory and patronage, aspiration and harsh realities. It is not possible to consider the role and value of the State Library without acknowledging the concomitant development and hurdles faced by the city that grew around it. As the public's relationships with knowledge, books and information changed, so too has the public role of the library. This case study of the public value of the State Library of South Australia examines not only what the public values about the State Library. This examination also addresses what 'public value' means in the early twenty-first century cultural context. Beset by austerity measures and the shifting goal-posts of cultural policy and evaluation, Eltham suggests that the current climate is dominated by 'cultural norms and political structures' which take as their target 'all too often the ideal of the public good or the broader commons' (2016, p. 28). This is in contrast to the prioritisation of the public good in decades or even

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[1] From the Kaurna Greeting Stone, placed outside the entrance to the Spence Wing. Taken from the state Library of South Australia website, viewed 4 October 2019, https://www.slsa.sa.gov.au/artworks-outside

centuries past, when institutions such as the State Library were formed. This thesis considers the rationale behind the formation of public libraries in general, but the State Library of South Australia in particular.

Black considers libraries 'lost worlds of culture', lamenting that library history research has been 'crowded out' of information studies curricula by:

> The emergence of a virulent 'new' vocationalism which plays down the importance of societal and ethical knowledge and emphasizes the teaching of pertinent skills which can be measured, as well as assessed in terms of their direct relevance to the workplace (1997, p. 97).

The prioritisation of measurable skills and instrumental expectations of libraries is a major area of investigation of this thesis, which describes the growing importance of quantifiable evidence of impact within recent policy environments. The shift from the qualitative to quantitative conceptions of public value within a cultural context, or 'cultural value', is the principal field of inquiry for this thesis, focusing on how this value is activated and made manifest within and by the State Library of South Australia.

Oliver describes the changing concept of public value thus:

> Public good has basically become a rationalised question of value rather than responsibility … and particularly, it has become a question of use value, frequently reduced to economic value and impact (2011, p. 32)

As with education, public health and social services, the economic rationalisation of public value over the last three decades has impacted on cultural institutions. Suddaby et al argue that organisational theories engaged to manage cultural organisations are lacking 'the focus on value, meaning and connection to culture' required to appreciate their value contribution over time (2010, p. 1235). North also addresses the role of institutions to communities from an economic perspective, finding contradictions between the nature of institutional operations and theories employed to understand them:

> Certainly neoclassical theory has been a major contribution to knowledge and works well in the analysis of markets in developed countries. At the other end of the scale, however, it does not provide much insight into such organizations [sic] as the medieval manor, the Champagne fairs, or the suq (the bazaar market that characterizes much of the Middle East and North Africa). … The simple fact is that the theory employed is not up to the task. The theory is based on the fundamental assumption of scarcity and hence competition … Put simply, what has been missing is an understanding of the nature of human coordination and cooperation (1990, p. 11).

Public institutions such as libraries are dependent on human interaction and cooperation, grounded on behavioural assumptions which are different to those of the commercial marketplace. Like the suq and fairs North refers to, the State Library of South Australia operates according to other less tangible modes of value creation and exchange. This forms the central argument of this thesis. The application of tools grounded in neoclassical economic theory to evaluate cultural (and therefore human) experiences impacts on perceptions of culture's benefits to the public and, by extension, their value and meaning within communities.

Marina Warner echoes Boyd and Richerson (2011) in describing creativity as a functional component of human cognitive processes, connecting cultural experience to memory and the creation of new knowledge:

> The same synapses of the brain fire whether you are remembering something that has taken place in your own experience, recalling a scene that you once read or saw in a film, or dreaming up an event that has never taken place…. This new understanding of consciousness confirms a defining dynamic of creativity itself: that the combinatory imagination at work does not engage separate faculties, but demands similar activities from the brain – visualizing, modelling, patterning, linking and building concepts and images. When making something, memories, empirical observation and make-believe continually overlap and interact (2018, p. 7).

This description does not reflect a neo-classical economic process which is dependent on 'competition' for its value. Nor does it imply an increase in value due to 'scarcity'. Rather, the creative process described by Warner is continuous, limited only by imagination and the cultural memory of the individual knitting together their brain's various synapses. Warner's description is a powerful example of the role of libraries, as both the site of a community's cultural memory and the institution facilitating the transfer of cultural material to activate the collective imagination of the public and create new knowledge, in perpetuity. There are no limits to what may be imagined. Therefore, its value cannot be assessed in traditional numerical, economic or commercial terms. This is supported by Rose who quotes the thoughts of Thomas Cooper (b. 1805), a shoe-maker-poet, echoing Warner's description of the affective processes of creative cultural engagement, and the difficulty in nailing it down:

> 'The power of fiction to instruct, the sources of the charm it exercises over the human mind,' he wrote, cannot be explained by any one-dimensional political, utilitarian, or scientific calculus. 'Perhaps, the secret of the charm of fictitious writing lies in the fact that it appeals to all the powers of the mind'- imagination, memory, reason, morality (2001, p. 38).

Regular consumers of culture, like Thomas Cooper, recognise that its impacts are immeasurable not just for their appeal to the different components of the subjective mind, but because their

impact is not always evident at the time in which they are experienced. Georgina Born sees value in understanding this dialogic nature of cultural production and stresses the importance of time when considering cultural objects, in this case a library, as being 'endowed with the capacity to generate both time and space' describing:

> Models of internal time-consciousness in which past and future are continually altering in cognitive time as they are apprehended from a changing present. Central to this model of time are retentions – memories or traces of the past – and protentions – projections or anticipations. Hence, the past is always experienced through retentions of previous events, just as the future is experienced through protentions of possibilities (2015, p. 368).

This thesis explores value and meaning of the State Library of South Australia as a site facilitating the human imperative to draw on the past to imagine the future by creating and sharing new knowledge. In acknowledgement of the role played by time in cultural production and the public's ongoing relationship with the State Library, this thesis will present a history of key ideas and influences that have driven its development and how they have persisted through to the present day. These historical ideals and values are reflected in evidence gathered for this thesis from today's State Library users. This continuity of values and purpose may be considered as a symbolic set of relationships, similar to those described by Born as a 'perspectival web of retentions and protentions' (2015, p. 369), connecting memory and values to contemporary aspirations and ideals. In this way, the symbolic importance of the State Library (and therefore all cultural institutions) to the public may be considered as one way of better appreciating cultural value, by understanding what it represents to the community. For this reason, the focus of this thesis was drawn to institutional value, which reflects the reciprocal relationship between the State Library and the public. The prioritisation of institutional value also offered the opportunity to diverge from the existing policy and research debates surrounding intrinsic and instrumental values prevalent across the literature.

This thesis identifies how the public describe what their engagement with the library means to them using their own terms and descriptors, rather than terminology borrowed from the commercial sector. This is achieved by implementing aspects of the neo-institutional approach suggested by Walmsley (2013, 2016), which recommends orienting evaluation strategies to reflect the perspective of audiences. It is also informed by North's 1990 treatise on the role and importance of institutions within economies and communities, and how not all organisational models fit the operations of all successful institutions. Qualitative data gathered for this research informs narrative articulations of value to reflect the subjective motivations, behaviours and

perceptions of the public, which vary from the language of value engaged in political, managerial or marketing sectors. Therefore, this thesis contributes to our understanding of the value generated by the library through a narrative presentation of what it means to its users. This reflects what Radbourne et al consider as 'the capacity of audiences themselves to contribute to the development and sustainability of an arts organization' (2010, p. 307). This neo-institutional approach is also supported by Brown and Novak who argue that the audience experience of culture and how they express it is a significant measure of impact:

> The vocabulary of intrinsic impact is meaningful to both practitioners and policy-makers, and has the power to transform dialogue about the value of the arts (2013, p. 232).

The State Library is positioned as an institution delivering collective cultural experiences for the public, extending beyond expectations that limit understanding of its functions to archival and information services.[2] I adopted this perspective to address the broad range of valued functions, symbolic relationships and engagements identified by the public and recorded during this research program. The public comes to be considered as the State Library's most important collaborators: citizens activating a public service to engage in a dialogic process of cultural production, rather customers in a competitive marketplace.

## 1.1   Laboratory Adelaide and Australian Cultural Policy

This thesis is a case study aligned to Laboratory Adelaide, a project funded by the Australian Research Council to investigate culture's value. The State Library of South Australia is one of the project's three linkage partners.[3] The Laboratory Adelaide team is based at Flinders University and its chief investigators are Julian Meyrick, Tully Barnett and Robert Phiddian. Adelaide was selected as the focus for more than its geographical proximity; the city also offers a quantum of well-established arts infrastructure built on Adelaide's 'rich cultural history and an active arts scene: a

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[2] Spooner notes that at the turn of the new millennium, as part of a major physical and corporate redevelopment, the library's mission statement was changed to position itself as a relevant information resource, possibly in response to the introduction of digital information resources: 'South Australian citizens, government, communities and businesses use and passionately champion the knowledge and information services and resources of the State Library' (2003, p. 270).

[3] The remaining two linkage partners – The State Theatre Company of South Australia and Adelaide Festivals Corporation – became subjects of other research projects for team members, notably concerning integrated reporting techniques, and testing the efficacy of Contingent Valuation methods for measuring cultural impact and a textual analysis of board reports.

Petri dish of just the right scale' (2018, ix). This research was designed to demonstrate the findings made by Laboratory Adelaide to advance understanding of the value and meaning of culture.

Laboratory Adelaide investigated what may be unaccounted for by the increasingly policy-driven imperative requiring instrumental and metricised indicators of value as sufficient evidence to confer or communicate success within the cultural sector. This project has coincided with seismic shifts in the Australian cultural landscape regarding public funding for the arts, the evaluation of cultural impact and increased expectations to deliver to the public instrumental benefits that have little to do with objectives and purpose of the cultural sector. Towse suggests that the role and value of the cultural sector is questioned more often than could be warranted:

> Even in countries that spend relatively large amounts of public provision or subsidy of culture, the cultural budget is only a small proportion of government spending, often less than one per cent of the government budget … However, cultural policy and public expenditure on culture are often controversial, attracting attention that is disproportionate to the amount of money involved (2003, p. 5).

Meyrick and Barnett describe how several approaches used to evaluate cultural experiences and institutions were derived from the commercial sector. In recent decades, these quantitative approaches have come to take precedence in Australian cultural reporting structures, allowing for 'numerical evidence to replace experience as the arbiter of sense, creating thin understanding at policy level' (2017, p. 14). Of greater relevance to this case study of cultural value, the focus on quantitative reporting and evaluation methodologies has diminished the voices of the public and often led to an outsourcing of audience development to third parties. Hence my focus on qualitative approaches and direct engagement with the public.

### 1.1.1   Research Environment

As will be covered in the Literature Review, much of the cultural value commentary addresses a perceived antagonism between intrinsic and instrumental values in cultural policy arguments, and which of these should be prioritised when making claims for the arts on the public purse. The variety of cultural values and associated arguments, which will be explored in depth in Chapter 2.9, is also evident within the library sectors of Great Britain and Europe. A range of library scholars suggest that recent public investment in community libraries is made according to economic data, rather than social impact studies as was previously more common (Aabø 2005a, 2005b, 2009; Audunson 2005; Kaufman & Watstein 2008; Usherwood, 2002; Vårheim et al 2008). Libraries have experienced additional pressure in recently years to justify their presence and function in a digital world (Norman, 2012). This view was confirmed by one of the State Library

executives interviewed by Laboratory Adelaide who suggested that: 'Our main competitor for visitor numbers was Google'.

This perception of either competition from online information service providers or encroaching redundancy has ramifications for how the State Library reports its operations. In South Australia, the major reporting requirement for cultural institutions was specified in a whole of government Strategic Plan.[4] This was recorded in the Libraries Board of South Australia Annual Report for 2013-14 as a 'cultural engagement' target of a 20% increase in attendances by 2014, with an expectation that the State Library would 'maintain and improve thereafter' on those increases (p. 10). This direction to increase visitor numbers was accompanied by the application of efficiency dividends, which according to Orr required the State Library in 2016 to find savings of $6 million dollars over three years (2016). Laboratory Adelaide is not alone in voicing concern for the absence of effective policy regarding audience development and the institutional impact of efficiency dividends across the Australian cultural sector (see White, 2018). There is growing expectation across the publicly funded cultural sector to deliver instrumental benefits, particularly economic and social impacts, as markers of success. This expectation is evident in the new SA Arts Plan 2020-2024, launched at the time of writing. Under the new plan, it is anticipated that arts and cultural organizations, including the State Library, will 'take a whole-of-government' approach to ensure the benefits of the arts 'are able to be realised across the range of sectors where the community interacts with government'. In addition, the arts plan encourages the sector to explore opportunities 'facilitating engagement between Arts and other government departments, particularly Tourism, Multicultural Affairs, Communities and Education, along with other levels of Government and also the corporate and philanthropic sectors'.[5] These strategic policy goals are quantitative in their focus, commensurate in scope and lacking qualitative nuance. They limit the range of evidence of compliance to indicators which can be measured and comparably evaluated, regardless of the core activity of the department being evaluated.

The proposal for the SA Arts Plan linked creative practitioners and cultural institutions to other policy areas with less consideration for the non-pecuniary benefits of arts experience. Hadley and

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[4] The Libraries Board of South Australia Annual Report for 2013-14, p. 10. The original South Australia's Strategic Plan was located on the government website viewed 30 June 2017 http://saplan.org.au/targets/99-cultural-engagement-institutions

[5] These objectives for the new plan are points 7 and 8 of a list of 8 objectives prescribing the governments future direction for the arts and cultural sector in South Australia. The full proposal is available (See: https://dpc.sa.gov.au/responsibilities/arts-and-culture/arts-plan)

Gray examined such instrumentalization of culture and describe the consequences of aligning cultural policy to 'other' policy areas thus:

> It was always the case that crude instrumentalization (in the sense of a simple imposition of the concerns of other policy sectors onto those of cultural policy) depended for its effect on the willingness of exogenous policy actors. These included national governments enforcing their preferences on cultural policy actors, particularly at the regional and local levels where central power holds less sway. As such, the greater the pressure to prioritise central policy expectations and requirements that were, or are, concerned with non-cultural sets of policy priorities, the more difficult it would be for outright resistance or more subtle forms of policy management to have effect. In this respect, the internal management of external policy demands take place within limits – limits that are not determined by actors in the cultural policy sector at all. … Cultural policy, in practice, is in a weak position in comparison with other policy sectors that have greater access to claims of policy necessity, centrality, legitimacy or priority than does the cultural sector … In these circumstances, it is not surprising that the cultural policy sector tends to be seen as an embattled arena of political actions whose claims of policy centrality and importance are simply not accepted as relevant in their own right, but only in so far as they actively contribute to governments' other policy ambitions (2017, p. 2).

In late 2019, the cultural sector in South Australia is in transition following the introduction of the arts plan, notable as much for its positive appraisal of the sector's potential, as for the lack of additional funding to realise it. Attendant policy decisions have led to the dismantling of Arts South Australia, the department for the arts. This involved the redistribution of the History Trust, and children's performing arts organizations to the Department of Education. The SA Film Corporation was moved under the auspices of the Department of Innovation of Skills. The responsibility for managing State cultural institutions was absorbed into the Department of Premier and Cabinet. As foreshadowed by Hadley and Gray, many in the sector see these departmental realignments as detrimental to South Australia's cultural policy position (2017, p. 2).

According to Hewison, the devaluation of culture's political importance may also negatively impact within high-priority policy areas, such as health and education, which also strive to achieve more than economic outcomes:

> People working in the subsidised cultural sector – in common with people working in education and health – believe that they are adding to the country's store of social capital, that they are improving the public realm. By encouraging people to engage in common cultural interests they are strengthening civic society and putting something back, as opposed to merely taking things out. The public realm is used for leisure and pleasure, but it is also where people become citizens, not just consumers (2006, p. 21).

Most professionals and volunteers I have worked alongside in the arts are motivated to contribute to the public realm. This places us at variance to some of the behavioural assumptions underpinning classical economics. We don't contribute our labour primarily for the money – we do

it for the public good. This is a significant motivation for people drawn to cultural vocations, such as those who become librarians.

### 1.1.2   Statement of Disclosure

As the Laboratory Adelaide project questioned the feasibility of instrumental attempts to measure culture's value, the public experience and perception of the State Library's value emerged as a key site of analysis (Meyrick et al, 2018). This provided an opportunity for me to focus on audience experience and its role in value creation. This direction also developed reflexively, from my own professional experience. I worked as a creative producer within the cultural sector for over two decades, designing and delivering public events in museums, galleries, festivals and libraries. My professional trajectory led me from collection management and marketing at the National Trust of Australia (Victoria) to the National Gallery of Victoria and State Library of Victoria where I designed and delivered programs of events for the public, subscribed members and education audiences. I also have experience working within the Victorian Department of Education, developing quality assurance frameworks for the design and delivery of digital teaching and learning resources and associated online platforms. These contract roles provided invaluable insights into the institutional challenges wrought by policy shifts and other major redevelopments; how to manage the public relationships and expectations when an institution undergoes radical changes to their infrastructure, services, policy environment and personnel. Through these experiences I understood the close relationship the public has with 'their' gallery, museum or library. The institutions were a part of their lives and supported relationships and connections across the community. Some members were as much a part of my daily working life as the gallery was to theirs. Together we were a community of common interest based in and around the physical site of the institution, each playing our part contributing to its economic resilience and long-term institutional value.

I've since designed and delivered more temporary cultural experiences, managing the Anne Frank Australian Exhibition, the visual arts program of the Perth International Arts Festival, and as Executive Producer of the Adelaide Festival of Ideas. On these occasions, the public is amorphous, temporary and drawn more by the concept than the site, yet the effect the experience has upon them is no less important. One comes to know how to judge if an audience had or had not engaged with or enjoyed an experience. I gained friendships and professional satisfaction from interacting with members of the public, building and re-building the connections each time through sharing our thoughts and personal stories. However, at the conclusion of productions,

there are challenges to record what had been achieved in qualitative terms that reflect both my impressions and those of the public. Instead, in most instances, all that was required as a record of the event was quantitative data, such as numbers through the door, social media hits and general media engagement. Numbers are a critical indicator of success and failure, yet rarely do they convey meaning beyond costs and audience size. Data collection is planned around the acquittal of sponsorship funding agreements, compiled in the time between the production and expiration of employment contracts, limiting time for analysis and reflection. Data is collected quickly to meet the obligations to sponsors, be they government or commercial. Evidence of impact reports the instrumental consequences of what was produced, rather than what motivated the production or what it hoped to achieve in terms of practice and quality. There was little 'presence' of the public in these reports, little room for their voices or stories. Demographic information that may have been gathered related more to future promotional and sponsorship strategies than the quality of the event. Exit interviews, participant testimonies or summary reports may be written for internal purposes, but without ongoing contracts it is difficult to tell if these have any influence. Public feedback has a 'feel-good' element which rarely makes it to government level.

These experiences of Australia's cultural sector reflect what Holden describes as a 'crisis of legitimacy', whereby the sector has become dependent on complex management tools to plan, deliver, promote and acquit cultural projects in a manner considered professional, accountable or 'legitimate' in the eyes of commercial and government partners (2006, p. 12). I, like many in the sector, were encouraged as part of our arts management degrees to embrace the experience of learning and using transferrable skills related to project management, budgeting, media liaison and marketing, considering them valuable in a sector that rewarded and demanded 'flexibility' and 'multi-tasking'. My ability to walk both sides of the operational divide within a cultural context – between creative production and accountable management – informs several aspects of this thesis. My argument is not against financial reporting or reporting obligations to partners; rather, the primary argument of this thesis is with what Holden describes, that 'an overemphasis on the concerns of any … interest group … [as being] detrimental to a properly functioning cultural system … A balance of power is needed' (2006, p. 59). This thesis will examine how this 'balance' may be achieved through understanding from the public's perspective what cultural institutions like the State Library deliver to those members of the public. In my experience, the public voice and their feedback resonate louder and for longer in the memories of cultural practitioners and institutions, than numbers on a spreadsheet. Why not policy makers?

## 1.2   The Research Challenge

The cultural sector is inundated with calls for further research into evaluation to improve how culture's value can be captured and communicated. Evaluation is an essential but often frustrating process: once submitted through traditional channels, it is a challenge to trace who receives these reports and what action, if any, may be taken. What is even more difficult to determine is whether recipients - reporting bodies, stakeholders, policy makers - have engaged with the documents. During an interview conducted by Laboratory Adelaide, one State Library staff member described disappointment at the lack of feedback on reports submitted to government: 'None, it's like a big black hole'. They also spoke of being contacted by Treasury officials for information that was available in the monthly report submitted to Treasury. The numbers, in terms of attendances and financial data, are the focus of government relations but there is uncertainty that those reports reflect the staff perspective of value generation, or if they are read at all.

Gstraunthaler and Piber note that cultural organisations are sites of friction concerning roles and purposes which mirror the intrinsic and instrumental divide, influenced by 'hundreds of years of independently evolving disciplines' (2012, p. 40). Similar divergent interests regarding mission, content and purpose are evident in accounts of debates between policy makers and the public concerning the State Library over a century ago. These competing priorities have generated significant analysis and continue to impede what Holden describes as 'the terms of engagement between politicians and professionals' in the cultural sector' (2006, p. 52). He concludes his analysis hopeful that his Cultural Value Triangle, describing intrinsic, instrumental and institutional forms of cultural value, would assist in building understanding between the public, professionals and government by bringing the tensions into the open:

> One advantage of the analysis is that it recognises the tensions and complexities without seeking to resolve all of them, because some of them are unresolvable. The approach of the funding system and of political rhetoric has been to keep these tensions hidden, but they need to be acknowledged. The artistic director's wish to do challenging new work, the politician's desire to see a more diverse audience and the public's conservatism need to be understood and accommodated (particularly at the systemic level rather than at the level of a single production) rather than fudged or, worse, ignored (2006, p. 57).

The analysis of culture's value is complex and to suggest otherwise is to abrogate responsibility to members of the public who are concerned with its co-creation, sustainability and success. Despite the focus on both intrinsic and instrumental values and their dichotomisation in the existing policy and evaluation literature, my research notes the significance of the State Library's institutional value - the combination of democratic principles, heritage and longitudinal value – as perceived

and articulated by both members of the public and practitioners. This indicates a potential disjunct between the current policy direction specified by the South Australian Arts Plan and the priorities of the public. By focussing on the role of the public and their relationship with the State Library, this thesis supports Holden's view that a balanced evaluation of culture's value needs to consider all points of view, rather than solely economic or quantitative measures.

Several commentators also confirm the need to adopt multi-disciplinary approaches to improve the evaluation of cultural practice to understand the value of culture from more than one perspective (Armbrecht, 2014; Leggett, 2009; Oakley & O'Brien, 2016). No arts organisation can afford to abjure their responsibility to acquit public funding and not report their financial position and statistics relating to engagement. These are important indices but do not tell the whole story. In the same way, those in positions of power judging cultural organisations on behalf of the public have a responsibility to taking an interest in what those numbers mean. The challenge lies in bridging the communication divide. I therefor adopted qualitative narrative approaches to present the stories behind the numbers by engaging the public directly, as will be discussed in my Methodology and presented as Part 2: Evidence of Value at the State Library of South Australia.

### 1.2.1 Key Questions

Given the complexity of the topic and methodological options available, this thesis engages two key questions to reinforce the parameters of the case study:

1. what meaning and value does the State Library of South Australia generate through the delivery of co-created and intra-subjective collective experiences for the public; and
2. how may this value be articulated and reported in a way that will both complement regulatory reporting requirements and retain meaning and significance to the public.

To address these questions, I pursued two parallel streams of investigation:

- Surveying the literature to explore issues surrounding cultural value and the influence of commercial and management language, policies and practices in the cultural sector; and
- Collecting and analysing qualitative data from the public expressing in their own terms how the State Library creates value for them as, ostensibly, the library's principal stakeholders.

I conclude that the reductive metricised evaluation methods that have become common, if not naturalised, in recent decades, fail to capture the library's total value and breadth of contributions in a manner that retains the value and meaning it creates for the community. The values and ideals that constitute the institution's contribution to the South Australian community are

intangible, symbolic, complex and even amorphous, which is why this thesis may also, at times, be equally so.

### 1.2.2   Contribution to knowledge

This thesis is the first research project to apply contemporary cultural value discourse to the State Library of South Australia. John Holden's treatises on cultural policy and his Cultural Value Triangle heuristic will be engaged to demonstrate how different stakeholders perceive the value created within the State Library, and the consequences of prioritising one form of value over others, when they are indeed co-dependent. Such oppositional approaches will be shown as contributing to the de-valuation of non-pecuniary factors underpinning the cultural sector, particularly those reflecting institutional values such as civic trust, social cohesion, expertise and the process of longitudinal value creation. The interdependence of Holden's categories of value will be addressed using data gathered from users of the library, to appreciate the complexity of the meaning and value the State Library provides to members of the public.

This research addresses the possibility that, in attempting to 'measure' the cultural value of the State Library, a more balanced understanding could be gained by focussing on the perspective of the public and how they perceive the value of their experience in their own terms. This perspective will be presented in narrative form to convey the public's articulations of value in their natural language, using terms and phrases volunteered as part of interview discussions or when completing the survey questions. This open-ended approach is discussed in detail as part of my Methodology. My approach was designed as an alternative form of data gathering to that usually undertaken at the State Library, which has customarily been written in marketing language, reducing the publics' complex experiences to predetermined categories of value easily reflected in numerical scales and rankings for reporting purposes. Engaging with the public and hearing what the library means to them, why and how they valued the institution as part of their lives was the highlight of this project, confirming for me as a practitioner their vital importance as part of evaluation programs.

This thesis contributes to ongoing conversations surrounding the public value of culture by demonstrating that institutional value does not receive the same level of attention in cultural value discourse that has been directed to intrinsic and instrumental values. I argue that this imbalance impedes the ability of policy makers to understand the relationship between cultural institutions and their public.

### 1.2.3 Research scope and approach

Unless specified, the research scope is limited to the current State Library of South Australia: the cluster of colonial and redeveloped buildings on the corner of Kintore Avenue and North Terrace; its digital resources; the state reference collection; and the public programs delivered on site. As will be addressed, the State Library shares a Board of Governors, institutional origins and administrative facilities with the Libraries Board of South Australia, who are separately responsible for the network of lending libraries across the State.

Some research participants mistake the State Library for other libraries that have shared the site at different points in its history. The City of Adelaide Lending Library and the Children's Library were the most common references made during interviews. However, as will be discussed, their early childhood or previous experiences with the site have come to represent for them a symbolic engagement, with the State Library signifying of all libraries they have experienced on that site. The findings indicate a variety of intangible and practical meanings for users, requiring a qualitative narrative framework to contextualise their articulations of value. The approach adopted for this thesis generates a detailed understanding of the role the library plays in the cultural life of the state via the representation of the collective experiences of individual citizens and visitors. This understanding supports two common conclusions drawn from over thirty years of cultural value discourse:

a) that there exists a need to consult practitioners and the public in order to understanding culture's value; and

b) to do so would require a multi-disciplinary approach.

This thesis explores and builds on these recommendations. This has required a qualitative data gathering program consisting of semi-structured interviews and open-ended visitor surveys conducted in person and online. Interviews were conducted with a purposeful sample of 25 members of staff, from the Director and Senior Executive Teams to volunteers and event personnel. These were undertaken during a period when the library was undergoing a prolonged redevelopment. This heightened and emotionally confronting time may have influenced some responses and only a handful are included in this document. The responses stand as a synchronic snapshot from that time of disruption, a state with which the library is not unfamiliar. Eventually, having taken intermission to deliver the 2016 Adelaide Festival of Ideas, my research priorities changed, as did several leadership roles within the library. To maintain a clear research direction

and consistent narrative, I decided to focus on the relationship between the institution and the public only. I collected 84 surveys and 14 interviews from members of the public over two days. This approach was designed to capture articulations of value from a broad representative sample of the library's diverse audience, offering them an opportunity to express their perceptions of value in their own terms, rather than limiting responses to selections from a range of prescribed options. My rationale for this approach will be presented in the Methodology chapter.

## 1.3   Theoretical framework and key terms

Having decided on a qualitative audience-based case study approach, I also needed to contextualise this thesis within a solid theoretical framework to provide credibility for the findings as well as to build on the work of my Laboratory Adelaide colleagues and other academics contributing to the field. This section will explain why I applied a neo-institutional approach to this research, to understand what the State Library means to South Australians today.

With over two decades of professional, volunteer and board experience in the cultural sector, I approached the question of how the public values the State Library from the perspective of a practitioner, rather than a theorist. I operated under the theoretical premise that members of the public and practitioners – be they administrators, producers, artists, curators and those who support them professionally and as volunteers within the cultural sector – gain benefits and value by engaging with culture and the arts through their work, hedonic experience and practice, which extend beyond economic terms. Cultural economist David Throsby articulated this premise thus:

> Cultural goods and services are valued, both by those who make them and by those who consume them, for social and cultural reasons that are likely to complement or transcend a purely economic evaluation. These reasons might include spiritual concerns, aesthetic considerations, or the contribution of the goods and services to community understanding of cultural identity. If such cultural value can be identified, it may serve as an observable characteristic to distinguish cultural from other types of commodities (2008, p. 219).

As a humanities thesis tackling a multi-disciplinary set of questions, my methodology is also by necessity similarly broad in scope. It involved adapting techniques from the social sciences, arts marketing practices and policy research. Two key theorists were selected to guide this research strategy. Both demonstrated and recommended the necessity of a broad and inclusive approach to cover the complexity of these questions.

The first step was to draw upon curatorial principles to ascertain value by considering the history of the institution, in a manner similar to what may be applied to an object in a heritage or digital

collection. Within this thesis, I present the historical overview of the library's origins and influences within the context of cultural value debates and creative industries discourse from Britain and Australia, focussing on influences impacting on the cultural sector in recent decades.

The following sections describe the main theorists supporting this research and define the relevant key terms applied throughout.

### 1.3.1   What do we mean by 'Culture'?

John Holden has written many things about culture, but few of his words ring as unquestionably true as this sentence: 'No one would suggest that defining culture is easy' (2006, p11).

To geographer Don Mitchell, 'culture' refers to a social construction 'actively maintained by social actors and supple in its engagement with other 'spheres' of human life and activity' (1995, p1). Australian cultural researcher, Ben Eltham describes the similarly anthropological sense of the term, where culture is 'a set of symbolic and social interactions amongst a people. […] a synonym for collective conduct' (2016, p3). At the other end of the theoretical spectrum, Matthew Arnold famously considered culture as 'a pursuit of our total perfection' through an acquaintance with 'the best that has been said and thought in the world, and through this knowledge, turning a stream of fresh and free thought upon our stock notions and habits' (1869, p VIII). The State Library of South Australia sits somewhere across these views of culture, as a contested cultural space, one that facilitates experiences undertaken for utility, leisure and aspiration in a way that Arnold would recognise and perhaps admire - offering a wide range of expertise and foundational knowledge disciplines. However, the State Library also allows and promotes research avenues across high-brow and popular sources. The institution is a shared space filled with Mitchell's 'social actors' from all ages and stages of life as well as community engagements across language groups and capabilities, as will be presented in Part 2: Evidence of Value. As such, the library also reflects Raymond Williams's assertion that 'Culture is ordinary: through every change let us hold fast to that' (cited in Meyrick et al, 2018 p10).

The literature drawn upon for this thesis reflects this diversity and complexity of these understandings of what 'culture' means. However, I found the most applicable and workable definition to be from Holden, who employed 'a narrow characterisation of culture to mean the arts, museums, libraries and heritage that receive public funding' (2006, p. 11). Holden's inclusion of libraries within these parameters is crucial for my argument, as it speaks to the both observable and intangible qualities of the library as a site of cultural experience, rather than as a site of

information services. Throsby's slightly jarring transactional description of cultural goods and services and their consumption, quoted on the previous page, fails to take account of the subjective phenomenological nature of a cultural experience. This could also be said of Holden's description. However, Holden's reference to public funding carries with it the obligations and responsibilities that cultural collecting institutions have to their publics over time – both as taxpayers and audiences, past, present and potential.

### 1.3.2   Ben Walmsley and Neo-Institutional Value

I engage a user-centric approach for this thesis that is drawn from the theoretical and methodological foundations presented by Ben Walmsley. Adapting elements of both neo-institutional and 'deep hanging out' methodologies allowed me to identify and reflect on what the library means to the public, capturing their articulations of value in their natural language, rather than applying terminologies derived from the commercial sector. Such modelling, where higher numbers equal a greater sense of value, exemplifies the commercially driven approaches which Walmsley describes as tending to 'generally equate value creation predominantly with profit rather than society' (2013, p. 2). As a consequence, Walmsley suggests that commercial practices leave 'no room for education and social impact', which are more closely related to the functions of libraries and the motivations of those who engage with them (2013, p. 4). The State Library of South Australia serves a range of cultural purposes: as a reference collection, event and exhibition space, a historical museum of artefacts as well as the online portal to a range of international digital collections made available free of charge to the public.[6] Research drawn upon for this thesis suggests that commercial management approaches to evaluation applied within a cultural or creative context like the State Library often fail to capture or reflect the collective and intra-subjective experiences of the public and the co-creation of meaning and value activated through interactions between library staff and fellow users. The focus on numerical outcomes – income, expenditure and door counts –  fails to account for differences in business operations, goals, resource capacity and service delivery mechanisms between cultural institutions, such as galleries, museums, theatres and libraries. A staff member interviewed for the Laboratory Adelaide project described it thus: 'We think we know what we know but we don't because we don't have the

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[6] The State Library website is the most common form of engagement with the library. However, the number of hits was only recognised by the Government as a measure of engagement after several years of lobbying by the then Director.

whole story'.[7] he capacity of State Library management to make informed decisions is thus greatly reduced.

Against this backdrop, Ben Walmsley's (2013) neo-institutional approach to evaluating cultural value was selected as an appropriate guide to inform my data collection and analysis strategy within the context of the State Library. Walmsley proposes that understanding how the public perceive the value of a cultural experience is an effective means of redressing the imbalances created by the metrification of cultural impact for both strategic planning and evaluation purposes:

> There appears to be a growing awareness of the inability of market economics to reflect the social value of organisations and their resources […] and this article makes the case for the adoption of alternative neo-institutionalist (i.e. sociocultural and practice based) models of value based on the real life experiences or praxis of artists and audiences (2013, p. 12).

Walmsley's research exploring neo-institutional value (2013) was conducted within the theatre sector. Although this research environment differed greatly from a library context, his methodology, derived from ethnographic and arts marketing practices, involved a range of public and practitioner perspectives of a cultural experience, describing how:

> Neo-institutionalism provides an alternative vision to the isomorphic, economics-based paradigm of organizational life that prevails in the Business and Management literature. The neo-institutionalist perspective takes a sociological view of organizations, considering their interaction with and impact on society (2013, p. 7).

This alternative approach appealed to my sense of the diverse co-creative nature of the library experience and the multiple forms of value it generates. I present how I adapted this neo-institutionalist approach to examine the value of the State Library in detail in Chapter 3: Methodology.

A later study of Walmsley's investigated audience impact within an arts festival by employing the immersive deep hanging out methodology (2016). Both approaches informed my research strategy to identify, capture and communicate the impact and meaning of the State Library to the public from their perspective. Both forms of cultural engagement shared commonalities of experiences and relationships with members of the public. Thus, the neo-institutional approach

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[7] Interview subject A2

was considered a viable means of examining the value of a co-creative site and experience like the State Library, despite the differences.

### 1.3.3   John Holden and the Cultural Value Triangle

This research also draws on the work of John Holden, whose Cultural Value Triangles are useful theoretical heuristics when addressing the principles of the cultural value discourse and how they may be applied to the State Library. Holden identified language as being at the heart of policy and public challenges surrounding cultural value (2006). His discussion of different types of cultural value – intrinsic, instrumental and institutional - and their application within this thesis will be examined in section 2.9 of the Literature Review.

Of particular significance to this thesis are his discussions concerning institutional value. Not only is this form of longitudinal or 'life-time building' value diminished amongst ongoing debates concerning instrumental and intrinsic values; it is also threatened by the short-term episodic 'eventalisation' of culture.

Holden describes Institutional Value as 'the way that cultural organisations act' which emerged from the data as the most relevant to the function and meaning of the State Library within the community (2009, p. 454). Like Walmsley, Holden also informed this strategy to data collection and analysis with a focus on the public perspective and describes its importance to society thus:

> Culture is the major place where citizens interact voluntarily with the public realm: you have to send your children to school; you have to go to court if you get a summons; but you go to a theatre, a museum or a library because you want to go. This seems to me to be something interesting, and something that politics should take much more account of. Institutional value should therefore be counted as part of the contribution of culture to producing a democratic and well-functioning society (2009, p. 454).

This thesis suggests that Holden's separation of cultural value into three constituent kinds of value has been helpful as a means of communicating the value of public funding for the arts. However, it has also resulted in a research focus on and political interest in mainly two forms – intrinsic and instrumental. It is no coincidence that these two oppositional forms of value have gained the most attention; it is a juxtaposition with a long history. Bennett describes the 'conflicting visions' between the subjective practitioners espousing intrinsic value of culture and the arts, the ineffable, subjective and transformative reaction gained from a cultural experience, as well as its contribution to the canon of practice open to review and critique (2006, p. 119). Instrumental value appeals to 'the heads' and the hip pockets, aligning with government policy benchmarks and

providing evidence of effects of the practice that was not the key objective of the practitioners but occurred as a result of the practice.

From my perspective, the latter two forms of value could not exist without the physical or digital presence, civic trust, associated behaviours, expertise and collections provided by the institution itself. As a consequence, institutional value, as defined by Holden and supported by other institutional theorists such as Douglass North, became the focus of this thesis; locating or reclaiming its importance as experienced and articulated by the public of the State Library. For as Holden suggests, 'What you want to know is the value that people collectively place on culture. And so you must ask them' (2009, p. 454).

Emergent public perceptions of neo-institutional value at the State Library articulate transgenerational relationships with its heritage and location, as part of Adelaide's North Terrace Cultural Precinct. This broader urban context and experience is acknowledged with a summary of the institution's history, presented in Part 2 of this thesis. The historical overview highlights the connections between the State Library, the foundations of South Australia at their origins within international movements advocating universal education and suffrage. This historical narrative will illustrate the challenges involved with establishing a viable institution balancing instrumental policy with intrinsic human need to access and share knowledge. Such challenges are nothing new to the State Library. However, a presentation of the role of institutional value as a driver to redress the balance and provide a more thorough understanding of its contribution to the community is.

## 2 LITERATURE REVIEW AND RECENT POLICY HISTORY

A review of literature concerning 'Cultural Value' equates to a review of international cultural policy developments and how they impact on the public, practitioners and the arts and cultural sector. Over the last three decades, the theoretical territory has been well-covered, the visitor and institutional data thoroughly examined. My survey of the literature revealed a circularity of methodological challenges, conclusions and recommendations. Many reflect how some cultural institutions are managed and evaluated in ways that may jeopardise their sustainability. There are also perpetual assertions that new methods must be developed, that the next cutting-edge approach or innovative technology will resolve the impasse, enabling the cultural sector to flourish and contribute to a thriving economy. Yet despite this, arguments concerning how and why cultural institutions are valued, or what role the arts fulfil within communities, have not significantly advanced. This thesis examines how these arguments have impacted institutions such as the State Library of South Australia and what they may represent to the public.

Despite the recurring findings of both commissioned research projects (such as the 2016 AHRC Cultural Value Project) and academic enquiry across Australia (Radbourne, 1997; Caust, 2015; Scott (ed), 2013; Meyrick et al 2018) and overseas (Holden, 2004, 2007 & 2008; Belfiore, 2004; Gray, 2007; Boorsma & Chiaravalloti, 2010; Brown & Novak-Leonard, 2013; O'Brien, 2015), there are few conversations emerging to move negotiations beyond the intrinsic / instrumental arguments in a manner that satisfies both practitioners and policy makers (Scott, 2014; Radbourne, Glow & Johanson, 2010; Belfiore, 2012; Walmsley, 2016). There is also little recognition of the latent potential of institutional values and collections, despite their critical importance to the public and their experience (Walmsley, 2013; Gilmore 2012). The public are largely, and perhaps intentionally, alienated from government policy development, in an environment where public consultation resembles market testing of government policy platforms.[8]

This thesis addresses how we conceive of and write about the value and values exhibited by the State Library of South Australia from the perspective of the public. Therefore, this literature

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[8] In early 2019 in the wake of dismantling the arts portfolio, the South Australian Government concluded a 'public consultation' to inform arts policy for the next six years. This survey respondent found that most of the questions were designed to gather evidence to support a proposed new museum and gallery of Indigenous art and culture, rather than allowing for a genuine engagement with public ideas. See: https://arts.sa.gov.au/articles/survey-closes-soon-arts-plan-2019-2024 Accessed 07/06/2019.

review by necessity covers broad disciplinary territory beyond cultural policy theory, establishing the library's economic, historic and political context. I adopted a hermeneutic perspective in response to the emergent value themes articulated by the people who engage with the State Library the most: the members of the public. The transgenerational value and meaning of the State can be understood by accessing public perceptions and experiences. This links the public of today to the founding of the state, and the original goals and ideals of the first public library in South Australia that still hold currency today.

## 2.1   The Focus on Cultural Value

Clive Gray describes how instrumentality has been a challenge facing the cultural sector for as long as there have been concerns about the use of public expenditure to support public institutions. However, instrumentality's ascension above other forms of public value, at the expense of artistic judgement and qualitative benchmarking, has not previously been experienced (2007, p. 211). The perceived measurability of instrumental value made the metrification of cultural outcomes the preferred evidence of impact, or return on investment, with policy makers, as a means of justifying the expenditure of public money. Gray describes this new direction as 'a shift from use-value to exchange value':

> This necessarily involves a shift in the focus of policy towards concerns that would more traditionally have been considered to be largely, if not utterly, irrelevant to the functional requirements of the sector: thus the opening of the Tate Liverpool in 1988 was largely discussed in terms of urban regeneration and social cohesion and it took some time before more traditional concerns of the museum system, such as curatorship, began to be considered for their significance in the context of the development (2007, p. 210).

To understand these shifts and the discomfort caused by the application of etic or external modes of evaluation to the cultural sector, it is necessary to explore key principles of economic and institutional theory, cultural policy and contemporary accounting.[9] This supporting research was essential to understand the broader economic and political context in which the State Library

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[9] The terms 'etic' and 'emic' are used in anthropology to describe the cognitive perspectives of external researcher (emic) and the internal subject (etic). Lahlou (2011, p. 611) describes the distinctions between the two terms and the methodological implications for interpretation of phenomena thus: 'the core of the problem is that we want to describe the experience of the insider, which is inevitably constructed from one's own cultural and personal history, into an interpretation that could be transferable into someone else's life world'. What the observer records may not have the same meaning for the subject of the observation. For example; Kelman (2017) found with his research into the impact of Culture Counts to evaluate local multicultural arts performances, that the emic language and approach used to gather data was a barrier for both creative participants and audiences with migrant backgrounds and thus were unable to articulate the value of their (etic) experience in terms that would fit the external (emic) modelling. See also Harris (1976).

operates, though also threatened to overwhelm the scope of this thesis. An overview, however, is required to trace how such changes were transferred to the cultural sector, in Australia and overseas. I focus on the imposition of commercial transactional language and methodologies to the funding, management and evaluation of cultural institutions, building on Meyrick et al's discussion regarding 'the centrality of language to the evaluation of culture' (2018, p. 84). To examine these changing expectations, assumptions and reporting practices as well as their impact on perceptions of cultural value and values over the last three decades, works consulted include Blyth (2015), Caust (2014), Cunningham (2002), Denniss (2018), Gleeson-White (2012, 2014), Gordon, 2012; Friedman (2002), Harvey (2017), Holling (2001), Klamer (2017), Matthews (2015), McCulloch (1994), Monbiot (2017), Mulcahy (2006), North (1990), Oakley & O'Brien (2016), Oakley & O'Connor (2015), Oakley & Ward (2018), O'Connor (2016), Oliver (2011), Stevenson & Wolfers (2011), Thoenig (2012), White (2017), Yeatman & Costea (2019) and Zweynert (2007).

There are a number of additional academic fields offering theoretical or analytical lenses through which to examine the public value of the State Library, such as Cultural Studies, Social Sciences and Psychology. However, I consulted a range of international literature from Library and Information Management studies to identify how the policy and economic shifts of recent decades had impacted upon the library sector in general. These included Aabø, 2009; Barclay, 2017; Breeding, 2010; Butler & Diaz, 2016; Ferguson, 2013; Hernon et al, 2014; Lancaster, 1988; Markless & Streatfield, 2006; Molaro & White, 2015; O'Connor (ed.), Raab, 2016; 2015; Roberts & Rowley, 2008; Rooney-Browne, C & McMenemy, D 2010; Saracevic, & Kantor, 1997; Saxena, & McDougall, 2012; Showers (ed.), 2015; Urquhart, 2015; Urquhart & Tbaishad, 2016; Usherwood, 2002; Vakkari, 2014; Vakkari, Aabø et al, 2014. These approaches, however, were beyond the focus of the Laboratory Adelaide project in which this case study sits. Instead, this thesis adopts a more curatorial approach, as would inform the development of an exhibition. This involves:

- an examination of available evidence to create a cohesive diachronic narrative thread linking the value of the State Library for past, current and future generations;
- selecting from the range of multi-disciplinary literature, described above, to best address the research questions; and
- conducting further research to address the emergent themes and categories of value as they developed following the data analysis.

Four common conclusions and recommendations emerged from a range of authors and commentators whose works span three decades and several countries. These acted as a set of theoretical premises or themes evident  through each step of my research, informing my understanding of the challenges involved with establishing how the value of the State Library is generated, activated and perpetuated in partnership with the public. These premises are:

- The rise of neoliberalism and hyperinstrumentalism informing the Creative Industries policy context, has had serious ramifications for the cultural sector in general (Banks & O'Connor, 2017; Belfiore, 2004, 2009 & 2012; Caust, 2015; Chiaravalloti, 2014; Crossick & Kazcynska, 2014; Galloway & Dunlop, 2007; Garnham, 2005; Hadley & Gray, 2017; Hewison, 2006; Holden, 2004, 2006, 2009, 2010; Meyrick & Barnett, 2017; O'Connor 2016; Oliver, 2011) but particularly for public libraries (Aabø, 2005a, 2005b, 2009; Field & Tran, 2018; Ferguson, 2013; Halpin, et al 2015; Irwin & Silk, 2019; Johannson, 2014; Kaufman & Watstein, 2008; McMenemy, 2007, 2009; Muir & Douglas, 2001; Norman, 2012; Rooney-Brown & McMenemy, 2010; Sandlian-Smith, 2016; Tenopir, 2011; Usherwood, 2002; Urquhart, 2015; Vakkari, 2014a & 2014b; Vårheim, et al 2008; Walker, Halpin et al, 2011; Wilson, 2016);
- Engaging the perspective of the public is essential to authentically identify and communicate an understanding of cultural value (Boorsma & Chiaravalloti, 2010; Brown & Novak-Leonard, 2013; Bunting, 2008; Gilmore, 2014; Gray, 2007; Johanson, 2013; Kazcynska, 2015; Keaney, 2008; Kelman, 2017; Leggett, 2009; Newsinger & Green, 2016; Oakley, 2009; Radbourne, Glow & Johansson, 2010, 2013; Reason, 2010; Scott, 2010, 2014, 2016; Slater, 2007; Walmsley, 2011, 2013, 2016);
- A respectful multi-disciplinary approach is required to understand and communicate value from the public perspective (Bulaitis, 2017; Cameron & Mengler, 2009; Carroll, 2016; Chiaravalloti & Piber, 2011; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Fischer & Schwartz, 2011; Gstraunthaler & Piber, 2012; Loach & Rowley, 2017; Madden, 2005; O'Brien, 2015; Phiddian et al, 2017; Rentschler & Potter, 1996; Throsby, 2004, 2008); and
- A potentially useful means by which institutions may capture and communicate the value and meaning of what they do is through the inclusion of narratives of value to balance the metrics-based reporting to measure public value in a cultural context, including libraries (Brophy, 2008; Calvert & Goulding, 2015; Dahlstrom, 2014; McCormack et al, 2016;

Meyrick & Barnett et al, 2019; Meyrick, Phiddian & Barnett, 2018; Shimizu & Lee, 2017; Watson, 2006; White & Hede, 2008).

This broad approach to the literature addresses the issues most relevant to the State Library's current set of historical, political and economic circumstances and those of the people it serves. Focussing on the four common themes also informs the direction and design for the methodological approach taken for this thesis, influencing the theoretical grounding for the primary data collected from members of the public, and forming the core arguments concerning the imbalance between qualitative and quantitative means of evaluating cultural institutions. This will be examined in greater detail in Chapter 3, Methodology.

## 2.2   How the Arts became an industry

In order to address the value of a state institution, an understanding of the roles of government and policy changes in recent years is required. One early commentator at the intersection of academia and cultural practice was John Pick. In 1988, he examined the role of government funding for culture from ancient to the present time, suggesting it operated as a means of regulating cultural expression. His work *Arts in a State* provides an overview of European cultural policy development, and challenges underlying assumptions concerning the value of culture and the arts within a society and the influence of government policy:

> Our 'arts policies' are often at best political constructs, thinly disguised control systems which rely upon the persuasive redefinition of many art terms to make them seem both benign and credible […] the percentage of GNP which a government chooses to give in grant-aid to the arts is no real indication of the government's civilization, nor of its generosity of spirit … the most liberal and democratic of governments of the twentieth century have given little and had no arts policies; the most vicious and inhumane have had arts policies … and have been extremely kind and generous towards their opera houses, museums, galleries and concert halls … Therefore, arts policies are only real when they are economic policies, and artistic aims are therefore necessarily subordinate to managerial aims (Pick 1988, pp. xiv-xv).

Pick describes arts policy as a strategic tool of government, used to accomplish policy related goals in fields outside or beyond the activities of the cultural sector. He describes the 'pervasive fallacy' in the political realm that the arts are nothing more than an industry (1988, p. xiv). Pick presaged the instrumental influence the UK's (then) new arts-as-an-industry policy regime would eventually have upon on creativity and communities:

> The risk in saying that 'the arts attract business' is that you come to define the arts as being only those activities which do attract business … policy making will boil down to being a simple question of how the 'arts industry' is to be 'funded'. Then all questions about the nature of creativity, about interpretation and criticism, about freedom and complexity, about

diversity and choice, about value and excellence will take second place to the supposed high truths of economics (Pick, 1988 p.xi).

Pick describes several historical and contemporary challenges prevalent within the cultural policy domain since the late twentieth century, namely the imperative of policy makers for immediacy and simplicity in communication. This abbreviated approach interprets the traditional qualitative language and attendant paradigms of the arts world into 'jargonese' for a 'narrow bureaucratic construct', subject to the political machinations of the day, in a world:

> … which is no longer subject to genius, creativity, interpretation and criticism, but simply economics. Bureaucrats cannot recognise or control genius or creativity, and they fear criticism, but economic forces, they can control. Therefore, art has to be seen as something which is 'like everything else', subject to economic laws (Pick 1988, p. xi).

Pick's forecasts regarding the relationship between government and the cultural sector of over thirty years ago have come to pass, first in the UK then in Australia. The consequences of this policy shift are still being felt across the sectors of Australia and elsewhere. As demonstrated within the *Arts and Culture Plan South Australia 2019-2024*, culture is expected to be more 'like everything else', as Pick suggests above, 'subject to economic laws', subjecting their complex value offering to the vagaries of vacillating scarcity, demand and competition.

The following section describes how economic rationalism was embedded in federal and state government policy, and how it has impacted on funding, operating regimes and evaluation processes across the Australian Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums (GLAM) sector.

## 2.3 Culture, control and tight fiscal policy

The tone and dictates of today's policy environment are heavily influenced by economic rationalism, described by George Monbiot as the 'dominant narrative … of market fundamentalism, widely known in Europe as neoliberalism':

> The story it tells is that the market can resolve almost all social, economic and political problems. The less the state regulates and taxes us, the better off we will be. Public services should be privatised, public spending should be cut, and business should be freed from social control. In countries such as the UK and the US, this story has shaped our norms and values for around thirty-five years, since Thatcher and Reagan came to power. It's rapidly colonising the rest of the world … it claims that unrestricted competition, driven by self-interest, leads to innovation and economic growth, enhancing the welfare for all… At the heart of this story is the notion of merit. Untrammelled competition rewards people who have talent, who work hard and who innovate. It breaks down hierarchies and creates a world of opportunity and mobility. The reality is rather different (2017, p. 15).

Monbiot traces the introduction of neoliberalism-as-national-policy to the Thatcher and Reagan governments in the UK and US in the late 1980s (2017, p. 15). This timeframe is important to note as it is synchronous with the period in which cultural value has been problematised. Where modern economics once promised 'freedom and autonomy', Monbiot sees that it has delivered the opposite, particularly across the public sector, subjecting public institutions to the competition for evidence-based funding:

> The workplace has been overwhelmed by a mad, Kafkaesque infrastructure of assessments, monitoring, measuring, surveillance and audits, centrally directed and rigidly planned, whose purpose is to reward winners and punish the losers. It destroys autonomy, enterprise, innovation and loyalty, and breeds frustration, envy and fear. Through a magnificent paradox, it has led to the revival of a grand old Soviet tradition, known in Russian as 'tufta'. It means the falsification of statistics to meet the diktats of unaccountable power' (2017, p. 17).

The negative consequences of market fundamentalism, as described by Monbiot, is that it destroys or impedes the public service innovation and prosperity they sought to achieve. Tother, the conclusions of Pick and Monbiot suggest that the subjugation of the arts and cultural sector to economic analysis has created a regulatory policy environment, managing the contributions of the arts and cultural sector to society through evidence-based evaluation and funding processes.

Economist Mark Blyth also suggests that rather than being a tool to serve the common good, the economies of nations have recently become subject to manipulation by proponents of neo-liberalism within governments, creating false impressions of budget emergencies, for political gain:

> Rather than seeing politicians as neutrally steering the economy according to the vagaries of the business cycle with an eye to the public betterment, public choice theorists discerned a political business cycle, wherein state spending was matched to the electoral calendar to produce booms and slumps that were the cost of elected officials seeking to maximise votes (2015 p. 155).

This strategy can be seen in sudden announcements of additional funding for popular projects in marginal electorates, by governments that had been implementing austerity measures for most of their term in office.[10] This paradoxical approach to economic policy is not without inevitable consequences. According to Blyth it leads to short-term policy development and design, as well as a fixation on data (2015 p. 155). This data comes in the form of trackable of polls, evidence of

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[10] A recent example can be seen the transcript of speeches made at the announcement of $552 million funding for projects in South Australia by the Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Premier Steven Marshall in the lead up to the 2019 Australian Federal election. https://www.pm.gov.au/media/doorstop-netherby-sal

impact, statistics and measurability, all implemented in pursuit of political control.[11] The work of Mark Blyth was recommended as a means of understanding what lay behind the claims of economic hardship and austerity that dominate political discourse. Austerity has become a common catch-cry, operating as a standard political premise as cliched as 'headwinds' to rationalise the need for ongoing funding cuts to the cultural, education, health and social services sectors.[12] In lieu of an innovation boom or one of the next Industrial Revolutions described by Gordon (2012), cuts to government budgets or increasing government debt are the most common ways to increase government spending on policy priorities. These are communicated to the public as austerity measures, often coming in the form of efficiency dividends.

Horne cites then Australian Prime Minister Hawke's introduction of efficiency dividends as part of the reform of the Australian Public Service in 1987. This savings strategy was intended as a short-term pathway to increasing the productivity of government departments and to reduce government spending:

> They will be required to reduce the real level of resources directed to administer existing activities by an average of 1 per cent each year over the next three years … all government agencies should be able to make continuing efficiency gains by improving their administrative procedures, making better use of improvements in technology and in the use of human resources (2012, p. 2).

Initially a three-year proposition, the efficiency dividend is described in Horne's background note as having 'changed very little since its introduction' (2012, p. 3). In more recent years, according to Hamilton, these savings measures have increased on occasion to up to 4 per cent and extend beyond cuts to 'departmental expenses' such as travel and advertising to the core funding allocated to agencies (2012-2014). This point may appear to stray from the research questions guiding this thesis. However, efficiency dividends have become common tools of reducing government spending in the cultural sector. Far from being a savings measure, this outdated strategy limits the amount of public funding being distributed to Australia's national cultural institutions. In order to maintain the expected level of service provision, institutions are

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[11] Blyth continues to describe inflation and increased unemployment levels as the major side effects of such an artificially created but highly consequential 'boom and bust cycle that produces ever-higher inflation' and a range of other irresponsible behaviours leading to 'polarized societies' and potential for political unrest, viewing such approaches to economic management as a threat to democracy (2017, p. 155).

[12] Robert Gordon from the US National Bureau of Economic Research questions the myth of constant and inevitable economic growth and suggests that the US economy, still the most influential in the world, is facing 6 headwinds to growth: 'demography, education, inequality, globalization, energy/environment and the overhang of consumer and government debt'.

encouraged to explore other income generating opportunities. These other avenues of revenue are generally partnerships with the business community, as suggested by the Arts & Culture Plan South Australia 2019-2024. However, as Carroll describes, they are entailed with attendant challenges and responsibilities:

> Sponsorships are not philanthropic donations – they are business investments from which the company wants a return that can be managed and measured … Competition for the sponsorship dollar is always intense and arts organisations need all their skills in matching the return to the investment…. Yes, they'll still want measurables and deliverables and audience synergy with simpatico brand values, but they'll also want some of your charisma and cultural capital (2018).

Richard Denniss uses the example of BHP's partnership with the Australian War Memorial to illustrate the paradoxical nature of public versus private funding partnerships with public sector institutions:

> Sponsorship is a cunning sleight of hand, but trickle-down economics is the greatest of all neoliberal tricks … Neoliberalism has trained us to thank our sponsors, not our fellow citizens, for what we have collectively achieved. But many of those generous sponsors work hard to minimise the generosity of their tax bill. The Australian Tax Office is currently chasing BHP for around $1 billion in underpayment of tax. If the company paid its taxes in full and ditched the corporate sponsorship, we… would be far better off (2018, p. 7).

In 2018, the Australian Major Performing Arts Group found that while corporate sponsorship is 'incredibly important to the arts sector', it is also 'a volatile source of revenue' subject to the fortunes of the commercial sector. This alternative avenue of support also comes with its own challenges:

> Cash sponsorship is more beneficial to major performing arts companies as it provides greater financial flexibility and is more readily quantifiable, but it is becoming increasingly harder to obtain and more difficult and expensive to service (*Tracking changes in corporate sponsorship and donations*, 2018).

By deed of inheritance, scale and capacity, major arts organisations, are better placed than the small to medium cultural sector to garner and service major sponsorship from either the government or commercial sectors. However, these commercially driven relationships also perpetuate the need for evidence to prove a return on the sponsorship investment which, from my experience, is tied to the priorities and performance indicators of the sponsor, rather than data that may be useful for audience or artistic development.[13]

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[13] Such arrangements also prevent the company and their associated contractors from publicly voicing dissent against the policies and practices of the sponsoring company or government department. Public servants are bound by the terms of their contracts not to publicly voice dissent. This is more the case within state institutions, as outlined by

Economist Richard Denniss describes a political and economic environment whereby evidence of impact is everything and it must be immediate. If it's not going to be recorded or measurable by the time the next election cycle comes around, and if there are no means of measuring the return on public investment, government funding may not be considered by the electorate as worth making:

> Much of the rhetorical power of neoliberalism arose from the way it laid claim to words like 'efficiency,' 'productivity' and 'growth', distorted them, and then injected them back into public debate in the most confusing ways. For example, once you convince people that government spending is wasteful, it is easy to argue that any cuts in government spending are efficient. It's not a complicated trick, but it is audacious. And it clearly works (2018, p. 10).

Over the course of writing this thesis, cuts to government funding have been an ongoing challenge for not only the State Library, but all cultural institutions in South Australia[14]. These cuts were compounded at the federal level by major budget cuts to the Australia Council. In 2016, the State Government announced a $6 million budget cut over 3 years, leading to the loss of 20 members of library staff. As described by Waldhuter in the local press:

> The reason given for the job cuts is simply budget cuts … The library has already shed jobs, we've lost a lot of casual jobs already and now the permanent staff are being targeted. We're looking at jobs going which include librarians, administration and support staff, and supervisors and managers and our members are now assessing what this will mean for public services (2016).

Though unpopular, job cuts were at the time considered the most effective means of meeting the required efficiencies. This course of action instigated a restructure of the remaining 70 full time staff which, as a government spokesperson suggested in Walshuter's article, would ensure 'structural and financial stability and sustainability while still being able to deliver on the priorities outlined in its strategic plan' (2016).

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Judith White in the case of NSW where employees agree to a code of conduct 'forbidding public comment on contentious matters' (2017, p. 28).

[14] During the writing of this thesis between 2015-2019, at least three international catastrophes also brought to the public consciousness the intangible non-pecuniary value of cultural institutions and sites: the destruction of World Heritage archaeology at Palmyra by Islamic extremists; the inferno that engulfed irreplaceable collections and programs at the National Museum of Brazil (https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/2018/09/news-museu-nacional-fire-rio-de-janeiro-natural-history/ ) and; the near total destruction by fire of Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris. Though closely related to the broader themes and challenges related to cultural value, these events were beyond the scope of this project to adequately address

Job cuts and financial tight times are not new to the State Library or most arts organisations of significant scale. What is new, as alluded to by some of the commentators discussed, such as Gray, Madden and Denniss, is the extent to which external economic and political performance measures are being used to regulate the operational capacity of public institutions, instilling them with, as Monbiot suggests 'frustration, envy and fear' (2017, p. 17). More than once in my career, I have been subject to such cuts and their attendant personal challenges, but in most instances, I can appreciate the logic involved. In pursuit of whole of government reporting and management strategies, policy makers in both Australia and the UK aligned the arts and cultural sectors with other unrelated departments, creating new industrial models that made sense to the economists and marginalised the arts sector even further from their true and original purpose. Working in the arts means doing more with less, in a way in which other government departments I've also worked for, such as Education and a Lotteries Commission, are rarely required to do. However, these other government departments are rarely expected to produce outcomes beyond their areas of control or accountability, as is expected of the arts sector.

## 2.4   Creative Industries: Policy boomerang or backfire?

Nicholas Garnham traces the origins of the phrase 'culture industry' to Adorno and Horkheimer who engaged the term in 1979 as a deliberate oxymoron to illustrate its inherently contradictory nature (2005, p. 17). According to O'Connor, it was New Labour who 'sort of' invented the idea of creative industries as a policy platform, though without the irony (2006, p. 7). This followed the introduction in 1994 of Australia's Creative Nation arts policy, which Radbourne describes as a turning point for Australian cultural sector, switching from a supply- to demand- lead direction to provide the 'means to link the audience with the art' (1997, p. 282). The Australian policy document heavily influenced the creation of the UK's *Creative Industries Mapping Document*, released in 1998 by the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) under the Blair New Labour Government. DCMS intended their policy to be the blueprint for the UK Creative Industries, linking for example, the burgeoning UK film industries with the digital economy, online gaming development with keepers of cultural collections and producers of artistic experiences. According to O'Connor, this roadmap 'provided then-Minister, Chris Smith, with the confidence to go to Treasury and ask for more money' (2016, p. 7). The alignment of the cultural sector with portfolios that were more politically and economically influential, namely the information and technology and communication sectors, was intended to produce a range of benefits for all involved. The most appropriate methods of providing evidence of these common benefits, and

thus 'proving' the return on the public investment in the creative industries, was quantifiably, reducing the impact for all forms of activity conducted under each policy umbrella to numbers – be they related to jobs, income, profits and audience sizes. The process of arts subsidy came to be managed and evaluated along the lines of all other forms of industry – as a set of inputs, outputs, growth and competitive edge, even though such techniques challenged both cultural practice and classical economics. Eleanora Belfiore describes how changes to the regulation of the cultural sector were based upon economic rationalism to demonstrate returns on the government investment of public moneys, whether it be for the arts or armaments sectors (2007, p. 184). Mark Banks describes the adverse effects of the new policy environment upon traditional arts practitioners, who were expected to benefit through the association with new digital industries:

> In many of these industries, in idealized terms, economic potentials and material existences were clearly conjoined to practitioner's own valued capacities to express and articulate their lived cultural experience, including, often, the production of oppositional meanings and social critique. But as demonstrably cultural – with the duality of culture and economy finely balanced in productive tension – these activities obtained a less positive evaluation than the emergent and favoured kinds of 'new' creative entrepreneurialism that appeared to privilege commerce primarily, and culture secondarily, if at all (2015, p. 39).

This emergent trend in the literature once again questions the application of economic principles and practices to the cultural sector, which continued to contribute to the community, adapting to changed circumstances.

In 2002 the Strategy Unit of the UK Cabinet Office released 'Creating Public Value: an analytical framework for the Public Sector Reform' which was applied across all government portfolios, regardless of their focus or fields of activity. O'Brien describes this alignment as a means of implementing 'scientific forms of management' across government, alongside more commercial models of financial accountability, namely cost benefit analyses (CBA) (2015 p. 84). This alignment would supposedly enable opportunities for the creative cultural sector to provide or inspire the new ideas that would drive innovation and thence transform the post-industrial economy (O'Connor & Banks 2017). The arts sector was encouraged, and therefore expected, to become less concerned with advancing exploratory arts practice and the public's experience of it. Instead, the sector was re-focused on generating revenue and benefits beyond their control, capacity and interestingly, beyond their funding level.

Scholars such as Chiaravalloti, Gray and Belfiore questioned the intentions of policy makers, who were insistent that the intrinsic values of the arts 'were at the very heart of what we do', whilst simultaneously requiring more evidence of instrumental impact in areas such as well-being, jobs

growth and community development (Belfiore, 2004 & 2009; Galloway & Dunlop 2007; Garnham, 2005, and Gray, 2007). Banks and O'Connor (2017) track the rise and fall of what became embraced as the Creative Industries policy platforms which promoted the links between creative populations and the regeneration of urban areas and communities. This questionable causal relationship led to what Franklin later described as the 'Bilboa effect', whereby cultural institutions and young moneyed 'creative classes' would increase the desirability of the neighbourhoods, benefit from improved employment levels and drive up housing prices. In theory, such 'culturally driven' social benefits would improve the broader economic outlook of post-industrial cities (2016, p. 80). Despite mounting criticisms and evidence regarding negative consequences of the UK government's policy direction, Belfiore suggests that the creative industries policy platform and the instrumentalization of culture as an idea 'seems to be rather resilient':

> As a result, in the last decade, arts organisations in the United Kingdom have been reinvented as 'centres of social change' (DCMS), and have been expected to contribute actively to urban regeneration and to the government's fight against the plight of social exclusion (2004, p. 184).

By the time the Creative Industries policy was adopted by New Labor in the early 2000s, the tone of discussions surrounding culture and the arts in UK had switched from one encompassing both intrinsic arts concerns and priorities, to one fixated on evidence-based decision making to inform and justify investment in government spending. Criticisms of the policy direction grew.

Sara Selwood connects the gathering of evidence of impact with government control of the sector in England, as well as questioning the authenticity and accuracy of data collection strategies, raising the question: 'what are the government's motivations for funding the cultural sector, how reliable is that information and what use is it being put to?' (2002, p. 72). Holden also pointed to the elephant in the room, highlighting 'a startling admission' from DCMS: despite years of demanding evidence of impact from the cultural sector, there was 'no ready-made and reliable methodology in place for calculating the economic impacts of cultural institutions' (2004, p. 17). Galloway and Dunlop also assert that the cultural or creative industries have little to do with either culture or creativity. They colourfully suggest that the use of such terms is stripping the traditional cultural sector of its own sense of language, meaning and intrinsic value, arguing that the creative industries 'is rather like a Russian doll; once the layers are discarded at the heart it appears an amorphous entity, with no specific cultural content at all' (2007, p. 29).

Aligning the arts and cultural sector with more influential policy domains can thus be seen to have resulted in a range of deleterious effects: the overcomplication of evaluative processes, if they existed at all; the loss of a culturally specific language of evaluation to describe what it is that they do, as well as; political influence and authority within environments dominated by economic impacts and instrumental outcomes. This occurred while policy makers insisted that such realignments are made to ensure the sustainability and resilience of the sector.

As both a practitioner and researcher, I became curious as to what enabled this contradictory and confused policy platform to become so resilient and ubiquitous. For the purposes of this thesis, I focused on what have been the local impacts on the cultural sector, and how it concerns the State Library of South Australia.

Under the banner of 'economic rationalism', widespread public sector reform saw the imposition of commercial language and practices across all areas of government both in the UK and in Australia, and this is what changed how public institutions were managed and evaluated. According to Christensen & Laegreid the main feature of the new approach was a simplified singular focus on economic norms and values:

> This implies an ideological dominance of economic norms and a subordination to them of many traditionally legitimate norms and values – like broader political concerns, sector-political goals, professional expertise, different rights and rules, the interests of societal groups and so on – making the conflicts and tensions between different considerations more evident (2002, p. 268).

Known as New Public Management model (NPM) the delivery of value for the public dollar became the preferred indicator of the responsible management of public moneys. This contradicted the traditional focus on delivering public value and social returns, and consequently challenged the nature of the public service, or what Haque describes as its 'publicness' – its traditional features of impartiality, distinction from the private sector and commitment to equality and representation (2001, p. 66). Instead, the focus of government activity became more commercial in outlook, politically strategic and instrumental in value. According to van Thiel & Leeuw:

> Schools and universities, local governments, other administrative agencies, developmental aid agencies … and organizations such as the World Bank are all involved in producing data and information on performance and results and, if possible, impact. … Believers in New Public Management (NPM) attribute a high priority to measuring output and outcomes and aim to base their new policies and management activities on this type of information – ideally meant to make policy implementation more efficient and effective (2002, p. 267).

The disparity between commercial or corporate-style evaluation approaches, emphasising instrumental outcomes, and traditional accountability and qualitative frameworks was observed across Western Europe and Scandinavia, where concerns were raised as to its impact on democracy and concepts of citizenship (Christensen & Laegrid 2002). Van Theil & Leeuw argued that the focus on measurement engendered by the New Management Model 'in the public sector can lead to several unintended consequences' that '…may not only invalidate conclusions on public sector performance but can also negatively influence that performance' (2002, p. 267). These 'unintended consequences' included the increase in cost for external auditors and government auditing divisions, 'market-type mechanisms' such as the outsourcing of public services to private contractors and competitive tendering for government contracts. These were accompanied by the use of 'performance indicators' that were found to 'lead to ossification, that is, organizational paralysis'.

> 'Another effect is referred to as tunnel vision, which 'can be defined as an emphasis on phenomena that are quantified in the performance measurement scheme at the expense of unquantified aspects of performance ' (Smith 1995, p. 284, cited in van Thiel, Leeuw 2002, p. 269).

In Australia, Jo Caust concluded that 'Industry models that have no direct relevance to the arts should not be used to monitor/evaluate this sector' (2003, p. 60). However, by the time her work was published, the public sector reforms that began with NPM had spread across both British and Australian governments. In a pattern that will be repeated over the first years of the twenty-first century, and despite the genuine concerns regarding their fallibility and misapplication, the measurement imperative became standard practice in the public service, merging with the adoption of new technologies for communication and information management. This created a level of co-dependence and mutual fascination between government and the technology sector. Each was caught in the cycles of growth and efficiency, fuelling dreams of innovation, data perfection and 'information superhighways' which, as US policy makers saw it, would 'create an economic policy that would be good for [the] country, and hopefully others too – to have an economy that wasn't just based on backbreaking labor [sic] but on the fruits of the mind' (Levine 2011, p. 21). This union between post-industrial operating and evaluation mechanisms and new technologies was fostered by the transactional New Public Management policy approach, setting the scene for the rise of a new arts and cultural sector that was more measurable, and which became known as the 'Creative Industries'.

## 2.5  The Misinterpreted Authority of Economic Impact

The shifts in public service management models towards econometric methodologies and language are seen across the literature as a suboptimal means of managing cultural institutions. Christopher Madden noted how 'economic rhetoric reverberates throughout public policy' causing frustration for its misapplication in fields and practices for which it was not designed:

> These are more than harmless misinterpretations; they impact on the real world through the actions of politicians, public servants and others with command over resources (2001, p. 161).

Madden refers to this misuse of economic tools and approaches within the cultural sector as examples of 'misinterpreted authority'. His analysis of economic impact studies, and their use within the arts and cultural sector, is pertinent for this thesis. He describes misinterpreted authority as an 'epidemic' subject to fashion, distracting from the cultural sector's natural strengths relating to experience and creativity. With a foresight similar to Pick's, Madden suggests:

> The greatest practical risk in adopting 'economic' impact studies for (arts) advocacy … is that governments might actually take notice of them … 'Economic' impacts invite governments to intervene in art and culture for financial gain, and the results can be disastrous. … [M]ediocre 'economic' impact numbers may dispatch arts and cultural policies further to the periphery of government interests, or encourage the view that cultural policy is a mere adjunct to policies aimed at wealth or job creation (2001, p. 172).

Australian governments have come to consider economic impact as a key indicator of success within the cultural sector, frequently misunderstood but essential for organisations requiring evidence of actual or estimated financial impact.[15] As both Pick and Madden predicted, the financial contribution made by the arts sector has become a key criterion when considering investment in arts and cultural infrastructure or assessing funding applications. This is demonstrated when arts organisations give prominence to economic impact in announcing their success. Tourism dollars and increased revenue are reported as markers of success before mention is made of the artists or local audiences.[16] Madden concludes that the prevalence of

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[15] My own experience has included having to outsource the compilation of an economic impact estimate, required as part of a funding application, to a business school. The funding body, when asked, did not have a standard model or formula for establishing economic impact, even though all applicants to the fund would be judged by the estimates they would provide and be required to acquit against them at the end of the funding period.

[16] For example, in their annual review of the 2019 Adelaide Fringe Festival, the organisation first thanks their teams before reporting the following: 'Last year, Adelaide Fringe increased tourist attendance by a whopping 72%! This led to an overall visitor-related expenditure increase of 24% to $36.6 million and a total of 150,257 visitor bed nights being generated by the interstate/international audiences and artists who came to visit Fringe (an increase of 53% per cent). See: https://adelaidefringe.com.au/annual-review-2019 viewed 24 September 2019.

misinterpreted economic impact studies within the arts and cultural sector is 'unwise' and a result of government demand, 'brought on by financial retrenchment and the rise of 'economic rationalism' in politics:

> The rational institutional response is to supply governments with whatever information they demand or whatever information moves them. If governments have found 'economic' impacts convincing, arts and cultural advocates have merely responded accordingly (2001, p. 173).

Since Madden arrived at these conclusions almost two decades ago, the use of economic impact studies and statements have embedded this instrumental approach to evaluating arts and cultural institutions. David Throsby, one of Australia's most prolific scholars working in the field of cultural value and economics, describes how such financial modelling tools can be 'useful' if done well, but the 'pitfalls are many' and well documented:

> There have been a number of dubious applications of the technique over the years; it seems that poorly executed studies are particularly likely to arise when the motive is advocacy rather than objective economic analysis (2004, p. 188).

Throsby suggests that non-economists, as most arts administrators are, may not always be effective when attempting to justify their value in economic terms using tools and techniques they do not fully understand. Balance sheets made cultural institutions intelligible to policy makers with little or no experience in the arts sector and allowed for their value to be (mis)interpreted as primarily an economic one, rendering the contribution comparable to (and competitive against) other government services. Madden's 'misinterpreted authority' could therefore be said to run both ways: both sides of the funded and funding body dichotomy were bringing the wrong tools for the job at hand. This view is supported by Chiaravalloti who found that arts management courses have not kept up with developments within the fields of performance measurement, accounting and finance. Despite the calls for 'new calculative processes', the field of arts management research 'has so far been unable to propose a theoretical framework for a contextualized, in-depth study of the practice of evaluation in the arts and cultural sector' (2014, p. 85).

Money and economic impact became the preferred means of demonstrating value within the New Labour Creative Industries policy context, even as scholars and commentators were noting serious questions about the government's rationale, methodology and the quality of the data being used

for assessment purposes and policy direction. O'Brien notes that the focus of the new policy approach came at a time when there were few publications available that could explain New Labour's choice to 'break with traditions' of earlier arts management practices, nor their disregard for 'the aesthetics of artistic accomplishments and their replacement by an intense focus on social and economic policy' (2014, p. 5). Scott ascribes much of the dissent against the new focus on measurement as stemming from the NPM's characteristic 'top-down, regulatory environment' whereby the traditional 'arms-length' principle was diminished and funding for public institutions was more closely tied to delivering government policy, 'which was increasingly pragmatic, 'instrumental' and unashamedly interventionist' (2013, p. 4). Radbourne, Glow and Johanson noted over several years a similar 'trend of arts policy and funding to measure and ascribe to the arts 'instrumental' qualities such as reducing crime, increasing tourism or increasing literacy rates' (2013, p. 5). Those few cultural organisations that can show causal links between their artistic practice and instrumental (economic) outcomes are rewarded. However, even though the arts sector is expected to report against these broader indicators of impact, they are beyond the scope or capacity of most arts organisations to manage or influence. This added expectation creates a disjunction between purpose and performance, between actual arts practice and the responsibility of other areas of government that are more likely to be better funded, equipped and capable of delivering in these areas.

## 2.6   Are Cultural Institutions an Industry?

This confusion of purpose and performance measures is nothing new. Douglass North explores this issue from the perspective of economics and institutional theory. He describes how institutions have been puzzling classical economists for some time; how such social constructs defy traditional imperatives on which economic theory is based, namely competition, scarcity and efficiency, the latter 'associated with group dominance at the expense of others (1990, p. 21). Writing almost three decades ago, North addresses the challenges that arise from the misapplication of tools and techniques from one field to another separate from the discipline for which they were developed. He notes 'a persistent tension in the social sciences between the theories we construct and the evidence we compile about human interaction in the world around us' (1990, p. 11). Under the banner of 'creative industries', the metrification of arts practice has encouraged a misapplication of tools to collect evidence of the human interaction within the cultural sector, particularly in regard to cultural institutions, like the State Library of South Australia.

North defines institutions as 'the rules of the game in a society or, more formally, are the humanly devised constraints that shape human interaction', norms of behaviour and expectation which can be seen and experienced in a library, for example (1990, p. 3).

North's work has been useful in exploring this intersection between institutional and economic theory, framing my thinking about the community origins and value of the library and how it is funded and managed today. From North's examination of institutions and economic performance, I concluded that the public's relationships with institutions, be they cultural, economic or legal, reflect and guide their relationships with each other. Libraries are therefore considered within this thesis to be institutional, rather than industrial (competitive, measurable) complexes, requiring different forms of evaluation and epistemological approaches (sociological, qualitative). This perspective becomes critical when discussing how the public articulate their perceptions of value gained from their interaction with the institution, forming the core data of this research. Their responses demonstrate the significant role the library plays in the formation and consolidation of Adelaide's community identity, for residents and new arrivals, as well as the level of self-moderated behaviours and proprietorial interaction with both the library site and the North Terrace Cultural Precinct. This is reflected by North who describes how interactions and exchanges define an institution and are dependent on intrinsic human experiences (1990, p. 11). This combination of social, cultural and transgenerational phenomena defies theoretical attempts to model, replicate and describe them using a single economic lens of interpretation.

> The simple fact is that the theory employed is not up to the task. The [classic economic] theory is based on the fundamental assumption of scarcity and hence competition... Put simply, what is missing is an understanding of the nature of human coordination and cooperation (1990, p. 11).

North's conclusion was more recently echoed by Hatton who called for a paradigm shift in how museum institutions could be qualitatively evaluated according to their vision and mission, in order to capture their complexity and the varied social values they provide. Hatton describes cultural institutions as 'serving multiple purposes supporting multiple masters' (2012, p. 129). Belfiore (2004) also describes how for the past three decades, under the creative industries' instrumentalist rhetoric, modern governments have required evidence of impact as an acceptable return on their investment, (such as funding towards a community library or festival), even though that return cannot easily be captured and reported:

> Public investment in the arts is advocated on the basis of what are expected to be concrete and measurable economic and social impacts. Moreover, this shift has been accompanied by

> growing expectations that such beneficial impacts ought to be assessed and measured
> before demands on the public purse can be declared fully legitimate (2004, p. 189).

This assertion is repeated across many of the conclusions drawn by several commentators, such as Banks and Hesmondhalgh (2009), examining issues of reporting or 'capturing' cultural value, as well as the absence of the public voice or their articulations of value.

The Creative Industries ethos spread from Australia, through the UK and across Western Europe, despite what Belfiore describes as an onerous 'audit explosion' and the consequent inauguration of an 'audit society' across the arts and cultural sector (2007, p. 185). O'Brien describes how government's persistent and unquestioning 'faith' in new auditing regimes meant there was a failure to recognize that beyond delivering 'measurable outputs that functioned well within mechanisms of oversight', the new approaches 'had problems in creating the outcomes that policy makers desired' (2015, p. 84). Belfiore, noting the consistent 'delicacy' in the selective use of evidence of impact to inform arts and creative industries policy, called the situation as many saw it: 'Bullshit' (2009, p. 348).

The growing discomfort with financial reporting pressures within Australian cultural institutions was apparent in the early 2000s. Kevin Fewster, then Director of the Powerhouse Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences in Sydney, noted in an interview with Peta Landman, that the economic imperatives imposed by government kept the museum focused on quantifiable up-front services 'whether it be exhibitions, programs, the web and other things':

> We have to generate an ever-increasing part of our budget through self-generated means,
> whether it's admissions or catering or other things, that very base measure is important. But
> you'd have to say, given how economics dominates, that the chance of getting [some]
> change at a basic [reporting] level is probably fairly remote (2001, p. 38).

Fewster also stressed that government funding came with a certain level of validation, that government support indicated an acceptance that policy makers and the society they represented considered 'that the role we serve is worthwhile and important to the community' (Landman 2001, p. 38). In perhaps the most ironically instrumental policy decision made concerning a museum institution, the Powerhouse is to be relocated from its nominal home on Sydney's Darling Harbour, the award-winning heritage Powerhouse building that had been specially repurposed to house it. The move, according to Judith White, was not proposed by the cultural sector; rather it came from 'the government's own Infrastructure NSW, a department dedicated to serving the commercial interests of developers and major institutional investors' (2018, p. 158). White describes how some saw the move as aimed at shoring up cultural access and infrastructure

spending in the Western suburbs. Others saw it as part of a broader government agenda 'to flog off inner city public assets for development' (2018, p. 161). Supporting Pick's and Blyth's connections between government policy decisions, investments and electoral cycles, White concludes that 'The Western Sydney experience strongly suggests that NSW government decisions on cultural spending in that region are heavily influenced by voting considerations' (2018, p. 163).

Whilst this is not to suggest that the South Australian government is considering the relocation of the State's cultural institutions from the North Terrace precinct. However, the ongoing case of the Powerhouse is worth noting as an example of how cultural policy and funding for cultural institutions can be tied to instrumental policy outcomes, at the expense of cultural relevance or even public will.

## 2.7   The rise of Instrumentalism

By the late 1990s, the creative industries became bogged down in a cultural policy debate that Bennett describes as 'a discourse of beleaguerment' (1995, p. 200). This lethargy could be attributed to the amount of debate concerning the misapplication of economic modelling to cultural institutions defending their role in communities, and their dependence on government funding. A defensive stance may, according to Belfiore, have been adopted in response to theoretical forms of attack from 'post-modern notions of relativism' that undermined their stance as keepers of cultural memory and tradition, 'shaking and drastically redefining the very notion of culture on which the whole system of public arts funding had been constructed' (2007, p. 188). Collecting institutions were also perhaps the least able to adapt quickly to new commercial regimes of management, concerned less with bottom lines and demonstrating evidence of policy impact than with long term collection preservation strategies and life-long audience education and development. Cultural institutions were expected to take a more commercial and quantitative approach to reporting; substituting traditional means of 'telling good stories' about impact (potentially open to bias and subjectivity) with robust evidence, complying to what Belfiore defines as 'policies of survival' (2003, p. 188). Ben Walmsley summarized the situation thus: 'the arts have increasingly become subjects to the benchmarks of incompatible disciplines and practices in order to meet the demands of instrumentalist policy makers' (2013, p. 2).

## 2.8   The South Australian Context

According to Jo Caust, the South Australian government has considered the arts sector 'an "industry", whose role is to contribute to the state economy' since the early 1990s, showing little regard for 'the essential nature of arts and cultural activities for of their broader social role' (2005, p. 27). Caust provides an overview of the state level policy environment in recent decades. This includes several studies, strategies and industry consultations conducted to 'address the role of the arts and culture in the state's development' that 'did not necessarily translate into promoting arts practice or arts development' (2005, p. 31). Instead, Caust suggests that Adelaide preferred to be known as "cultural destination' rather than 'a cultural producer' (2005, p. 31).

At the time of writing this thesis, South Australia is undergoing another arts policy reset, following the election of the Liberal party in 2016. One of the initiatives undertaken during the first months of government was the dismantling of the Arts South Australia department. Rather than a separate portfolio and Minister, the Premier, Stephan Marshall, assumed oversight of the major cultural agencies, including the State Library. These institutions are managed by a reduced body of administrators as part of a portfolio under the Department of Premier and Cabinet. Over the current term of government, there have been several community consultations presented to garner feedback from the arts community. These consultations have operated from a premise that the arts sector is not to expect a return to former levels of funding. With echoes of Mark Blyth's description of austerity measures, the cuts have been made in response to a well-publicised budget emergency, initiated at the federal level, and would not be reinstated once the emergency had passed. This was borne out by the 2019-2020 South Australian Budget, whereby an additional $6 million was allocated for specific projects that align with instrumental policy priorities. However, according the Arts Industry Council of South Australia (AICSA) this additional funding does not replace the $18 million cut from arts organisations in recent years (2019).

### 2.8.1   Institutions in a Festival State

Within the context of the Laboratory Adelaide project and this case study approach, I was interested in the status of institutions in a state that prides – if not defines - itself on its festival calendar, as though there was no other form of cultural context, practice or experience. In writing the history of the Adelaide Festival of Arts in the late 1970s, Whitlock suggested that 'Adelaide people take themselves, their city and their Festival rather seriously. Many of them feel themselves to be experts in the arts, or at least on the Festival' (1980, p. 173). Caust attributes the pre-eminence of the Festival in the South Australian cultural ecology to interventionist

government policies from the 1970s becoming naturalised and nurtured into the twenty-first century (2005, pp. 29-31). As will be addressed, festivals have a sporadic and hedonic relationship with the public who, as Richards and Palmer suggest, 'evaluates what they see, and not the process that leads to create or produce the work' (2010, p. 86). Richards and Palmer also suggest that:

> Eventfulness is intimately linked to the process of placemaking. For the last three decades there has been a convergence between the realms of cultural and economic development (2010, p. 31).

This instrumentalist perspective is of interest for two reasons. The facilitated rise of festivals to cultural dominance in the Adelaide's cultural landscape coincides with both the rise of neo-liberalism, evidence-based arts policy making, and the 'crisis' of cultural value. Also, economic impact is not a model that can be seamlessly applied to an institution of long-standing such as the State Library. Economic measures are an uncomfortable fit for collecting institutions which operate not with goals surrounding eventfulness, but rather the opposite: conserving and curating physical items in perpetuity. Festival management, however, fits the economic rationalist model more effectively than cultural experiences or institutions that run longer than a few weeks and where the impact of investment may not be evident for some time. From my experience, festivals are comparatively simple to evaluate using numbers through the door, ticket sales data, media spend, tourism data and social network hits. These quantitative measures provide the impression of both social and economic impact – outputs and outcomes, as described by O'Brien (2015, p. 84). However, without a critical narrative context, such data mean little to either practitioners or the public. The relationship between the public and the State Library is of a different nature and is overlooked or at least misunderstood by policy makers attempting to evaluate the two types of cultural experiences using the same techniques. The complex nature of the relationship between the State Library and its public is explored in Chapter 7: Evidence of Value.

Public institutions in South Australia are currently not given the opportunity to describe their purpose and impact in terms that provide narrative context and the sense of meaning experienced by the public. Quantitative evaluation practices engaged by many festivals, where higher numbers equal a greater sense of value, exemplify the commercially driven approaches described by Walmsley, which 'equate value creation predominantly with profit rather than society' (2013, p2). As a consequence, current planning, projecting or evaluative practices leave 'no room for education and social impact' (2013, 4) which, as will be discussed, are the main functions of the State Library.

## 2.9   John Holden and Culture's Crisis of Legitimacy

Within this legacy of frustration and confusion, John Holden emerged as one of the most influential voices amongst cultural value debates and remained influential over the development of this thesis. As addressed in Chapter 1: Introduction, Holden is best known for his standard nomenclature for the types of value the arts and cultural sectors generate, using terms that are accessible for practitioners and policy makers alike. As useful as his advances identifying three main forms of value and their associated cohorts of interest have been, it could also be said that his well-known heuristic – the 'Cultural Value triangle' - provided the capacity for some policy makers to zero in on just one form of value and thereby perpetuate the problems Holden was indeed trying to solve. The advances made by Holden and his colleague Robert Hewison to provide a conceptual framework and agreed language for addressing public value within the cultural sector, were the result of a commission from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

### 2.9.1   Squaring the Cultural Value Triangle

In 2004, Holden and Hewison undertook a review of the evaluation procedures of HLF's funding programmes. This followed a conference held in collaboration with the National Gallery, National Theatre and AEA Consulting in 2003 (2006, p. 12). This conference, 'Valuing Culture', was convened to address a growing awareness and discomfort from across the sector with then-current policy direction and compliance frameworks that demanded evidence of impact beyond the organisations' remit or capacity. Holden identified that the arts only seemed to exist in the minds of policy makers as means to other ends, valued only for 'what it could achieve for other economic and social agendas:

> Somehow, over a period of decades, politics had mislaid the essence of culture, and policy had lost sight of the real meaning of culture in people's lives and in the formation of their identities (2006, p. 12).

Drawing on research into similar issues in the fields of environmentalism, anthropology and accounting, Holden explored 'ways in which to express the value of things that are difficult or impossible to measure' (2006, p. 12). From this collective work, Holden and Hewison identified 'three interlocking kinds of Cultural Value' (2014, p. 2).

Holden's trisection of cultural value into distinct categories is intended to establish a common language to communicate different forms of value to policy makers, practitioners and the public, thereby facilitating better understanding of policy impacts within the cultural sector:

> We need a language capable of reflecting, recognising and capturing the full range of values expressed by culture. Some of those may be covert and naturalised, they may coexist or conflict, but only with clarity about what they are can we hope to build wide public support for the collective funding of culture (2004. p. 9).

Holden's work was not without its critics (see Selwood, et al, 2005). However, it succeeded in identifying the complex nature of cultural value while establishing a common language for it, to facilitate communication between stakeholder groups associated with each corner.

The three forms of value are intended to be seen as linked but separated, to aid trans-sectorial discussion and break down a complex topic into more easily accessible categories for different stakeholders. These terms and the following definitions will be applied throughout my discussion, particularly regarding the findings from the data analysis and narratives of value drawn from the interview process.
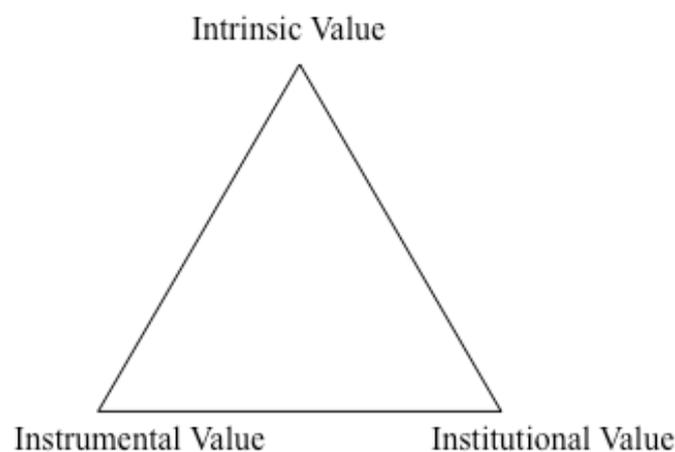


**Figure 1: Holden's Cultural Value Triangle.**

(Source: Holden 2006, *Cultural Value and the Crisis of Legitimacy*,
https://www.demos.co.uk/files/Culturalvalueweb.pdf)

### 2.9.1.1 Intrinsic Value

Intrinsic value is the subjective individual experience of culture. This includes how artworks or cultural experiences impact on audience members or visitors on emotional, intellectual and spiritual levels, in ways that cannot be replaced through other means. Holden suggests that:

> Intrinsic values are better thought of then as the capacity and potential of culture to affect us, rather than as measurable and fixed stocks of worth (2006, p. 15).

Holden stresses that intrinsic value is 'difficult to articulate in terms of mass 'outcomes', posing problems for those looking to produce impact statements. Owing to their largely intangible and subjective nature, intrinsic value is a major challenge when accounting for culture, for as Holden asks, 'how are they to be measured?'. Because of the personal and often emotional connotations of intrinsic value, it are also more difficult to discuss, aggregate or forecast (2006, p. 14). These difficulties posed by the variability of intrinsic value are demonstrated by David Throsby's description of the intrinsic benefits generated by the arts. Throsby associates intrinsic value with the historical, social, symbolic, aesthetic and spiritual value experienced by the public: such phenomena are subjective, personal and 'incommensurable' (2001, p. 28). Despite or perhaps because of the intangibility of intrinsic value, it represents the core motivation of many practitioners and consumers of cultural experiences.

### 2.9.1.2   Instrumental Value

As addressed earlier in this chapter, instrumental value refers to subsidiary impacts that are generated through cultural practices that are not an artists' or company's raison d'être. Holden describes instrumental value as tending to 'be captured in output, outcome and impact studies that document the economic and social significance of the investing in the arts' (2006, p. 16). These figures include tourist dollars spent in the city during festival periods, social or community well-being indices, and employment statistics which can usually be represented in numbers.[17] As with intrinsic value, Holden suggests that the assessment of instrumental value is not an authentic indicator of impact nor without its challenges (2006, p. 16).  These include the capacity for arts organisations to demonstrate causal links between their practice and the outcome, the shortage of longitudinal evidence available to support culture's effects within a shifting political and cultural context and the prevalent, though not always successful, use of instrumental impact statements as advocacy tools, as discussed earlier in this chapter.

### 2.9.1.3   Institutional Value

Institutional value developed as the core of this thesis, once I became aware of the focus given to the intrinsic and instrumental binary frequently addressed in the cultural value literature. In Holden's description of institution value I recognized in my own experience working within the

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[17] The Adelaide Fringe is a spectacularly successful event for the city and give prominence to their economic impact in their reporting of their success. See https://2016-assets-adelaidefringe-com-au.s3.amazonaws.com/production/2018/06/14/07/02/10/f63d3bd2-7035-4938-ade9-79ad18a91a18/2018_AnnualReview_Digital_01.pdf

cultural sector. Many of my roles focused on the public, how to improve services to ensure the integrity of the institution and the development of ongoing positive relationships with the public. Holden describes institutional value thus:

> Institutional value sees the role of cultural organisations not simply as mediators between politicians and the public, but as active agents in the creation or destruction of what the public values. The responsible institutions themselves should be considered not just as repositories of objects, or sites of experience, or instruments for generating cultural meaning, but as creators of value in their own right. It is not the existence of a theatre or a museum that creates these values; they are created in the way that the organisation relates to the public to which, as a publicly funded organisation, it is answerable (2006, p. 18).

Institutional value relates to how cultural institutions relate to and engage with their public, the processes that facilitate their engagement, the behaviours and attitudes demonstrated at the point of encounter, and the delivery of the services, be they providing access to collection items or welcoming people through the door. These performative behaviours inform the perception and co-creation of value within cultural contexts. They are related to the public service tradition where every citizen is treated equally and, in turn, engenders a civic environment of equals. Later, Holden suggests institutional value is:

> All about the *way* that cultural organisations act. They are part of the public realm and *how* they do things creates value as much as *what* they do [original italics]. In their interactions with the public, cultural organisations are in a position to increase – or indeed decrease – such things as our trust in each other, our idea of whether we live in a fair and equitable society, our mutual conviviality and civility, and a whole host of other public goods. So the *way* in which our institutions go about their business is important. Institutional value should therefore be counted as part of the contribution of culture to producing a democratic and well-functioning society (2009, p. 454) [original italics].

I elected to focus on institutional value for this thesis as it seemed the most critical in reflecting the relationship between the State Library and the South Australian community that has been built up over time. Institutional value is also of interest for its role in underpinning the two more frequently cited and debated forms of value – intangible and instrumental.

From 2004 Holden produced several pamphlets and articles expanding on the concept of cultural value, responding to UK government policy developments (2007, 2009), linking it to culture's relationship to democracy and issues of access and class (2008, 2010). In 2015, the complex nature of cultural value developed further in with the production of The Ecology of Culture: a Report commissioned by the Arts and Humanities Research Council's Cultural Value Project. Holden adopted 'the use of ecological metaphors' to describe the complex network of relationships and dependencies across the UK's cultural sector:

> Culture is often discussed as an economy, but it is better to see it as an ecology, because this viewpoint offers a richer and more complete understanding of the subject. Seeing culture as an ecology is congruent with cultural value approaches that take into account a wide range of non-monetary values. An ecological approach concentrates on relationships and patterns within the overall system, showing how careers develop, ideas transfer, money flows, and product and content move, to and fro, around and between the funded, homemade and commercial subsectors. Culture is an organism not a mechanism; it is much messier and more dynamic than linear models allow (2015, p. 2).

Holden's description of culture as a living interconnected 'organism' aligned with my experience of working within the cultural sector of Adelaide. I read this report shortly after delivering the 2016 Adelaide Festival of Ideas as Executive Producer. Much of my energies were directed towards raising financial and pro bono support from the South Australian community, following the loss of core government funding, and becoming what by Meyrick et al describe as an 'independent event' (2018, p. 68). Holden's report informed my thinking around the relationships between the State Library, the members of the public who engage with it and the broader North Terrace Cultural Precinct, as will be addressed in Chapter 5: Evidence of Value.

Having focussed on the research opportunity identified in the literature, to engage with the public to understand cultural value, I needed to develop or adapt a valid research approach that would support such an empirical line of enquiry. The work of Ben Walmsley offered such a pathway, guiding the research direction toward a qualitative ethnographic approach which would comfortably suit the needs of this research, the parameters of the thesis genre and the developing relationship between myself and the State Library.

## 2.10 'Whose Value is it Anyway?'

The value literature in general, and Walmsley in particular, suggest that if public institutions are accountable to the public, I should be asking the public what they value most about the State Library.

Ben Walmsley suggested 'a neo-institutionalist and creative approach to articulating artistic value, which would evaluate organizational performance in line with artistic objectives' (2013, p. i):

> Neo-institutionalism provides an alternative to the isomorphic, economics-based paradigm of organizational life that prevails in the Business and Management literature. The neo-institutionalist perspective takes a sociological view of organizations, considering their interaction with and impact on society. This perspective is particularly appropriate for arts and other non-profit organizations, which collaborate and co-produce within complex institutional networks and deliver missions that relate to their social impacts' (2013, p. 7).

In the article 'Whose value is it anyway? A neo-institutionalist approach to articulating and evaluating artistic value' (2013), Walmsley proposes an alternative perspective to identify and capture value generated by cultural organisations - to not so much overcome the metrification of cultural impact but rather, to reclaim the role and language of the audience or visitor within the strategic planning and evaluation of a cultural institution. Neo-institutional value prioritises the stakeholder experience and expectation as the most appropriate set of goals to be met by a cultural institution, as opposed to the imposition of external or etic forms of quantitative measurement and evaluation. The neo-institutionalist approach struck me as a more grounded perspective from which to gain understanding of what the State Library, and by extension, the cultural sector, provides to the community; how 'value' is perceived and articulated, and what it means to members of the public.

> There appears to be a growing awareness of the inability of market economics to reflect the social value of organisations and their resources … and this article makes the case for the adoption of alternative neo-institutionalist (i.e. sociocultural and practice-based) models of value based on the real life experiences or praxis of artists and audiences (2013, p. 12)

This approach aligned with my understandings of value creation in a cultural context, based on past professional experience, especially the reciprocal nature of the relationships between an institution and its public. It echoes Douglass North's descriptions of institutions' ability to regularly confound economistic thinking (1990, p. 11). Walmsley's approach also overcomes much of Madden's misinterpreted authority by drawing on the natural language of the public and extant relationships within the State Library. Walmsley's research was grounded in qualitative data – thematic, narrative based profiles and case studies. By engaging with audiences directly, he was able to tell the story of the company's value using the natural language and perspective of stakeholders in order to plan the future and judge the success (or otherwise) of the institution. Following a survey of commercial and traditional arts marketing approaches to evaluation, including commentators such as Boorsma and Chiaravalloti (2010), Walmsley concludes:

> There is perhaps a circle to square here: namely that arts organizations should place audiences at the heart of their missions and strategic objectives and evaluate their performance accordingly (2013, p. 6).

This conclusion aligned with my motivations as a practitioner in the cultural sector, where the needs and expectations of the public were my primary concern: if their needs and expectations are met or exceeded, they would be more likely to return or recommend the experience to others, thereby increasing the numbers through the door and the public value of the institution. The methodology for this thesis is based on Walmsley's immersive ethnographic approaches, aiming to

explore the importance of institutional value when considering the contribution made by cultural institutions to our communities.

I adopted a similarly broad and ethnographic stance when designing my research strategy. It could not simply be grounded in theory, or library evaluation or cultural value literature or sociological or museological practices. It had to draw on and integrate a range of methods and approaches to move from the micro subject level of the singular case of the State Library to incorporate comparatively extra-local influences over its practice, identity, sense of value and future. This bespoke approach demonstrates my commitment to capturing expressions of value and meaning from those using the library, as well as external factors impacting on their relationship with it. This reflects the conclusions and recommendations reached by a number of cultural value commentators (Johanson, 2013; Kaszynska 2015; Kelman, 2017; Miles & Gibson 2016; Newsinger & Green 2016; and Reeves, 2014).

### 2.10.1 'A collective phenomenon with a tradition of creating public value'

Walmsley's fieldwork took place in a site different to the site of my case study: the theatre and festival sector, the latter with the study of the additional 'deep hanging out' methodology. Both approaches have informed my thinking regarding how to capture and communicate the impact and meaning of the State Library through audience reflections of their experiences.

Walmsley describes theatre as 'a collective phenomenon with a tradition of creating public value' (2013, p. 6). In both theatres and libraries, communities of meaning creation and value generation form within and around the institution, so that the subjective experience of individuals collectively supports the organisation to 'release its capacity for shared meaning making' (2013, p. 6). These issues are important for Adelaide. At the time of writing, the North Terrace cultural precinct is expanding to incorporate Lot Fourteen, a new site described by State Government planning documents as 'the most exciting urban renewal project in Australia and the centre piece of the $550 million Adelaide City Deal investment'.[18] As will be addressed in later chapters, the public's relationship with the State Library, and the value they perceive in their experiences, extend well beyond the books and into the city around them. This brings libraries back into consideration as sites of intra-subjective and phenomenological co-creation, and raises significant questions

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[18] See Renewal Adelaide website, viewed 5 October 2019 https://renewalsa.sa.gov.au/projects/lot-fourteen/

regarding how we can confirm and communicate the State Library's role, meaning and value within the community to those responsible for its future.

## 2.11 The Library Perspective

The theoretical background to this thesis in cultural value is supplemented by selective library history studies, as well as economic and policy literature specific to current library evaluation practices. This range demonstrates how the common themes and consequences identified within the cultural value literature impact upon the library and information services sector across Europe and Australia.

The cultural value of libraries is largely absent from the cultural value literature. However, they are experiencing the devastating impacts of hyper-instrumentalism and the pressing need for narrative as well as numbers to reflect their value and meaning for all stakeholders. The following survey of relevant literature from the library services sector demonstrates what happens to communities, institutions and social identity when critical public services such as community libraries become subject to economic rationalism. In some ways, such an exploration of this 'worst case scenario' may appear unwarranted or hyperbolic, when exploring such a preeminent and visible state institution such as the State Library. However, given the entrenched neo-liberal approach to managing public services in Australia and the rhetoric of austerity employed to justify instrumentalist evaluation priorities, we should not take anything for granted.[19]

Much of the afore mentioned literature and commentary focusses on the dichotomy between intrinsic and instrumental values, and the associated policy arguments for and against culture's claims on the public purse. This debate has been particularly fractious within the library sector, especially in Europe. Falling mostly under local government authorities, in recent decades community libraries have been stripped of public funding. These decisions have largely been based on economic rather than social impact studies, as well as local governments' imperatives to deliver 'efficiencies' during times of austerity. The drastic and in some cases destructive decisions were

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[19] Perhaps the most disturbing anecdote shared with me over the course of this research concerned a discussion with a government official who reportedly predicted that 'soon' the library will not have any paid staff and its services will be delivered online or via a volunteer workforce. This accompanied numerous suggestions that many feared the buildings on North Terrace will be emptied and leased to private businesses while the collections would be moved to the outer suburbs, effectively ending the site's function as a library open to the public. These anecdotes may hopefully be completely unfounded, but they speak volumes about people's fears and possible misunderstandings regarding the function, heritage and value of the institution.

compounded by a lack of understanding and available research demonstrating the social and educational role libraries provide to communities. The extent to which local libraries supported public value generation, through their facilitation of digital literacy education, children's activities and other community based programs has since been well documented (Aabø, 2005a, 2005b, 2009; Audunson 2005; Kaufman & Watstein 2008; Usherwood, 2002; Vårheim et al 2008).

### 2.11.1 Looking at Libraries and Impact.

Public libraries in the UK and Europe have been hit with both the vagaries of new instrumentalist policy alignments, plus durable perceptions of existential threats posed by digital information technologies. Public libraries are notably absent in much of the cultural value literature and are not considered 'culture or the arts' in the same way as festivals, galleries, theatre or museums. Belfiore notes that public libraries in the UK are a statutory local government authority, separated and therefore not part the DCMS policy portfolio (2007, p. 194). This may explain why they are not covered by much of the research into the value of culture, which focuses more on cultural activities at the State or Federal levels. This distance may once have boded well for libraries in the UK, were it not for the universal austerity pressures of budget cuts plus the imposition of general performance reviews every five years. These were aimed at establishing how well councils meet general managerial goals, namely 'economy, efficiency and effectiveness' (Byrne 2000, p. 317, cited in Belfiore 2007, p. 194). Clive Gray also describes the hierarchy of local government policy strategies which form the compass for cultural achievement, and they have little to do with culture:

> It indicates that there is a burden of expectation that cultural policies should provide a host of solutions to problems that are originally economic, social, political, or ideological …
> Shifting the focus away from the 'cultural' component of such policies and viewing them as instrumental means to non-cultural ends is likely to become an increasing concern for policy makers (2007, p 207).

Muir and Douglas describe how digital technologies were deliberately imposed on public libraries in a bid to modernize and increase their efficiency. They also note that any savings generated were unlikely to flow on to infrastructural improvements or book purchases, activities that would have improved visitor services, thereby increasingly the all-important numbers through the door:

> Yet despite this pressure on funding and its knock-on effect on services, Local Authorities still judge the overall performance of libraries on a range of performance indicators produced for the Audit Commission and Best Value. These indicators include the number of items issued per head, number of visits per head, the cost per visit, the number of books and recordings available pre head, the expenditure per head and the percentage of library users who found the book/information they wanted, or reserved it, and were satisfied by the outcome. … such

indicators are for the most part irrelevant and unfair. They may also fail to give any real indication of the quality of service provided. Indeed, only the last indicator specifically focusses on the needs of the customer (2001, p. 267).

Although they were not included in much of the research regarding the impact of the NPM and Creative Industries policy research, public libraries in the UK were faced with similar pressures to measure their performances using quantitative methods, with similar attendant frustrations, discomforts and challenges. Muir and Douglas state that politicians saw local public libraries as 'a 'soft' option for budget cuts' (2001, p. 266), calling for benchmarks and standards 'of service that are important to users of the service'. These calls appear to have been ignored or handballed between levels of government in search of a pair of hands willing to take action rather than pursue advocacy, as *Bookseller* lamented:

> This lack of a clear national mandate for libraries makes it impossible for local authorities to defend branch budgets against 'core' services like schools and hospitals. Rather than constant strategy reports and 'visions', libraries need a line in the sand on resourcing and priorities (2007, p. 23).

These observations about libraries could be applied across the cultural sector. Muir and Douglas pleaded for understanding from policy makers:

> There is a duty for elected members and service managers to ensure the right indicators for performance are used. 'What gets measured gets done' has been the catch phrase for a generation of managers. The current performance indicators for library services are not appropriate and may actually be inversely related, that is when one increases, the other decreases (2001, p. 270).

The results of such contradictory evaluation and policy frameworks within the public library sector have been icily logical, predictable and catastrophic. The Chartered Librarians and Institutes (CILIP) sought legal advice and took the matter to parliament to clarify with the Department of Culture, Media and Sport 'what statutory duties local authorities have to provide library and library-related services'. They were most likely disappointed by the result. According to the respondent, Baroness Neville-Rolfe:

> The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 places a duty on local authorities to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service. It is for individual local authorities to determine how best to provide this (2015).

A survey of the literature related to the closure of British libraries would constitute a separate thesis to this one. Within the parameters of this research project, only a small percentage of the available literature can be included as part of this examination of the value of the State Library of South Australia. As previously mentioned, the value of our cultural institutions, on any scale, is

usually only determinable when they are under threat or indeed, as has been experienced in communities across the UK. However, given the common historical roots of the State Library with similar institutions under threat in the UK, it is pertinent to include some commentary to reflect common values, such as those expressed by high profile commentators like Neil Gaiman, who see libraries as being 'about freedom:'

> Freedom to read, freedom of ideas, freedom of communication. They are about education, about entertainment, about making safe spaces and about access to information ... a haven from the world. It's a place with librarians in it (2018).

Unfortunately, such pleas for support only came forward when it was too late. According to Cain, even though the UK Central Government was called in to prevent the decimation of the local library network, instrumental practices at local government level has seen 608 local public library closures in the UK between 2010 and 2017 (2018). Barnett estimates that over 500 libraries have been handed over to volunteers to run (2016, p. 1). According to Glazer, these closures equate to the loss of 7538 paid staff roles (2019).

## 2.12 Summary

The work of Holden, Walmsley and other commentators presented in this review suggest that capturing value as it is experienced and articulated by the public in their own terms offers the potential to provide context and meaning for regulatory financial reporting requirements. Grounding the quantitative and financial data within a qualitative narrative makes the data less susceptible to being politicised or leveraged against changeable strategic goals or policy shifts. Rather, a qualitative narrative approach reasserts the voice of the public to whom all publicly funded cultural agencies are ultimately accountable.

As described in section 2.1 of this literature review, there are several scholars and commentators from around the world who have arrived at four common conclusions over more than three decades of cultural value investigations:

1. They critique the rise of hyperinstrumentalism and a policy environment dominated by economic rationalistic approaches to evaluation;
2. They argue for the need to engage the public to identify value in a cultural context;
3. They propose that a multi-disciplinary approach is required to address that need; and
4. They conclude that the communication of cultural value as perceived by the public requires a narrative-based approach.

I am addressing all four of these recommendations by applying them to one cultural institution. No one has yet undertaken a cultural value analysis of the State Library of South Australia and its public. This thesis addresses this gap. My intention is to draw on the literature to develop a methodological approach using Holden's language and definitions of cultural values. This will be informed by a neo-institutional view adapted from Walmsley to understand the value of the State Library and what it means to the public of South Australia.

# 3   METHODOLOGY

## 3.1   Introduction

This thesis presents the State Library of South Australia as an expanded case study of culture's value, pursuing what Burawoy describes as 'not detachment but engagement as the road to knowledge'. The approach is described thus:

> The extended case method applies reflexive science to ethnography in order to extract the general from the unique, to move from the 'micro' to the 'macro', and to connect the present to the past in anticipation of the future, all by building on pre-existing theory. (1998, p. 5)

Investigating the public value of the State Library requires a transition from accounting for the unique history, context and publics of this institution (the micro) to addressing broader questions of public value across the Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums (GLAM) sector (the macro). This can be achieved by taking a flexible multi-disciplinary approach to qualitative data gathering and analysis, as suggested by authors from various Social Sciences, such as Patton (2002), Riessman (2008), Punch (2014) and Clarke & Braun (2017). These works are supplemented by a range of arts management and cultural value commentators (Armbrecht, 2014; Boorsma & Chiaravalloti, 2010; Brophy, 2008; Brown & Novak-Leonard, 2013; Chiaravalloti & Piber, 2011; Holden, 2015; O'Brien, 2015a; Throsby, 2008) who argue that authentic understanding depends on the adoption of a transdisciplinary perspective. Consequently, the methodology developed for this thesis draws on a diverse secondary literature to contextualise the empirical data to construct an understanding of the State Library's (hence the sector's) significance to the community, one that extends beyond indicators of instrumental value and conventional arts marketing approaches.

Designing a suitable research framework was one of the major challenges of this project. Current metrics-oriented evaluation methodologies are geared towards identifying ways in which institutions can determine their economic and social impacts that align with current policy initiatives, rather than reflecting their public value per se. Phiddian et al, observe that 'systems like Culture Counts abstract the question of value without making it any clearer' (2017, p. 175). They are costly to use, and serious questions about the sharing of data have been raised and require further investigation (see especially Selwood 2017, and Gilmour et al 2017). The challenge for this thesis was to design a research strategy aimed not only at creating new ways of organising data, but at developing a better understanding of what the public value at an institutional level. Such a

strategy is finely balanced between cultural value theory and methodological feasibility. The first addresses the three key concerns identified in the literature review: the repetitive nature of conclusions; the need for public and practitioner perspectives; and the requirement of a multi-disciplinary approach. I addressed the challenge of feasibility by limiting the scope of inquiry to one library institution of complex historical origins during a time of disruption. I also applied my own practitioner perspective to understand the challenges faced by arts organisations caught in the maelstrom of efficiency dividends, changing public expectations, complex institutional responsibilities, and shifting political priorities. Scott describes these issues, familiar across the GLAM sector, from the perspective of public museum institutions, thus:

> Accountability … is a requirement of our professional practice. Governments, policy-makers and other funders require more evidence that there is a return on their investment. But in an economic climate where the total amount of public funding is declining, museums in many countries find themselves fighting to maintain a position as essential public goods in competition with other necessary services. We are no longer just accounting for public monies. Providing evidence that museum work results in public benefit is now crucial to our survival (2013, p. xiii).

There is a unique opportunity to gather articulations of value when an institution is under threat or in a state of transition. When I was planning to gather data for this thesis, the State Library was experiencing heightened tensions and uncertainty following their most recent government budget cuts. I therefore designed this methodology to examine more directly what the State Library contributes to the community and the public, through engaging with them on a range of different fronts.

This thesis does not propose a single method of measuring the value State Library in quantifiable terms. Nor do I accept the validity of a singular numerical form of measurement to reflect the value of the institution. Rather, this integrated approach is intended to reflect both the complex nature of a State Library, and the longitudinal perspective required to appreciate the accrual of public value over time. I propose that the value experienced by a public may be the most appropriate and authentic resource for understanding a cultural organisation's (hence culture's) contribution to the life of a community. I present the resulting narratives of value and accompanying thematic analysis in a way that can assist other practitioners, policy makers and those with an interest in culture's value to understand what those of us working in institutions like a library actually do, for whom, and why.

To present the different perspectives and mixed-methodological techniques employed in the course of this research, this chapter is split into the following sections:

1. Discussion of the use of the first-person experiential perspective.

2. Overview of the principal theorists and relevant approaches gleaned from the literature informing the research strategy.

3. Description of the primary data gathering undertaken at the State Library.

### 3.1.1   A first-person perspective.

When presenting key arguments and findings, I occasionally engage a first-person pronoun to reflect my participant-observer status and level of experience working as a creative producer in the cultural sector, as described in Chapter 1: Introduction, (section 1.1.2). This stance is strongly supported by Starfield and Ravelli who suggest that '[t]he social and political location of the researcher is articulated as [a] *requirement* [original italics], necessitating the presentation of an autobiographical self which is imbricated in the research process' (2006, p234). My knowledge of the field and the complex network of relationships within institutions was helpful when reflecting on the library's operations during the data gathering phase, which coincided with a period of prolonged and tense organisational restructure. My experience with other difficult institutional transitions helped me navigate subject selection and survey distribution, creating points of engagement and empathy with subjects to guide discussion from an informed position. This also assisted my ability to draw connections between policy and management shifts and how decisions in both domains have impacted, or would be likely to impact, different agents within an institution. Insights relying on my experience of the cultural sector in Australia complement the conclusions drawn from the objective, data-driven sections of the research strategy.

The expanded case method, as presented by Burawoy (1998), offers the capacity to engage a first-person perspective, drawing on information beyond official public channels or via traditionally objective scientific methodologies, thus illuminating 'discrepancies between normative prescriptions and everyday practices' (1998, p. 5). This approach also provides the capacity to understand value beyond a marketing survey's limited range of capture options. Rather, my strategy invited participants, some already suffering focus group fatigue and an overload of questionnaires related to the (then) current institutional redevelopment, to express what the library meant to them. Through these articulations, the public come to define the value of the library, rather than select from a list of what someone else with an interest in certain responses has nominated as important.

## 3.2   Principal Theorists

As previously discussed, much of the research literature consulted for this thesis lacked the nuanced, phenomenological insight into cultural experience to fully recognise the complexity of a public's responses, or account for the varied characteristics of the professionals and volunteers who make up an institution's delivery teams. Selwood concluded that evaluation methodologies employed in evidence-based policy decision-making in the UK were failing due to the one-sided nature of data collection within the cultural sector. She also noted a lack of subjective perceptions as well as the shortcomings of the analytical tools employed:

> The methodology only tends to extend as far as measuring the producer end of the equation. This means that the standard evidence paradigm, such as it is, focuses on benefits which are perceived to have accrued, rather than those expressed by the end beneficiaries (2002, p. 70).

Lacking was an understanding of, and focus on, serendipitous sociocultural interactions - simple human relationships – afforded by cultural institutions, which is critical to the delivery of visitor experiences and valued highly by members of the public. A focus on the public's perception of value, as the 'end beneficiaries', was therefore influential in the development of this research strategy. The work of Holden and Walmsley in particular proved consonant with my approach.

### 3.2.1   John Holden

As previously discussed, I draw on the work of John Holden to describe forms of value, and identify key policy dynamics over the last three decades. Holden also argues that 'cultural value' is mercurial, generated at the unique juncture of time, site (both physical and digital), visitor experience, and institutional or professional expertise, originating with an interest or enquiry from a subjective member of the public and facilitated by trusted and knowledgeable members of staff:

> Value is located at the encounter or interaction between individuals (who will have all sorts of pre-existing attitudes, beliefs, and levels of knowledge) on the one hand, and an object or experience on the other.  … it was vital to re-establish a convincing and serious language to talk about the way in which culture moves us (2006, p. 15).

Through the cultural engagement process, the value latent in the collections of cultural institutions like the State Library is realised, made manifest by the interactions with the public. The quality of this experience is predicated on what Holden describes as 'institutional value', which has attracted less attention from cultural researchers, and as such became a key area of investigation here (2006, p. 17).

Holden's focus on public interaction with institutions guided me in the development of a transdisciplinary perspective, influenced by ethnography, as a way of studying human interaction, behaviour and value systems. This approach pays heed to its limitations, as recommended by Nightingale (1993, p. 150). I was not living and working within the library and making observations as an ethnographer would. Rather, I was interviewing and conducting surveys in a way that built trust, used empathy and allowed respondents to be both aware of their subjectivity and to respond in their own words. The approach to data collection and analysis was also influenced by cognate sociological theorists such as Burawoy (1998) and Punch (2014), the thematic analysis of Braun and Clarke (2017) as well the role of narrative in the presentation of qualitative research findings, as suggested by Riessman (2009) and Meyrick et.al. (2019).

### 3.2.2 Ben Walmsley, Neo-institutional Value and Deep Hanging Out

Walmsley outlines key issues of value co-creation and evaluation within the cultural sector, describing the challenges arising from the colonisation of the sector by the language and praxis of commercial management (see especially, Walmsley 2013, 2016). Yeatman describes the breakdown of an appropriate language for cultural experience, and the diminution or absence of narrative informed by the tacit knowledge of experts in the field, as symptomatic of the growing influence of managerialism and the associated terminology and practices across the public sector (2019, p.3). As both a researcher and a practitioner subject to these changes, I focused on how evidence of their impact was perceived by members of the public at the State Library, hoping to move beyond what Walmsley describes as the cultural economics approaches proposed by Hesmondhalgh (2007) and Throsby (2001), whereby 'public value is often quite simplistically equated with value for public money' (2013, p. 3).

Walmsley argues that Neo-institutionalism, as suggested by Hasse (2005), provides:

> An alternative vision to the isomorphic, economics-based paradigm of organizational life that prevails in the Business and Management literature. The neo-institutionalist perspective takes a sociological view of organizations, considering their interaction with and impact on society. This perspective is particularly appropriate for arts and other non-profit organizations, which collaborate and co-produce within complex institutional networks and deliver missions that relate to their social impacts (2013, p. 7).

This approach recognises and represents the value of individuated and highly subjective (yet collectively experienced) engagements between members of the public and cultural events or institutions, determining the public value of that organisation by placing the public and their perceptions of value at the centre of their mission. It is an approach also suggested by other

international researchers such as Brown & Novak (2007), Radbourne et al (2010) and White & Hede (2008). Neo-institutionalism is influenced by arts marketing practices, where the imperative is driven by clear articulation of the customer/client relationship. Marketing is described by Kotler and Armstrong as a skill set focussed on 'managing profitable customer relationships' which 'create value for customers and … capture value from customers in return' (cited in Walmsley 2013, p. 5). This value is most often considered in commercial terms, rather than intangible subjective terms required to reflect the benefits of cultural experience. Drawing on the work of Weistein & Bukovinsky (2009) and Boorsma & Chiaravalloti (2010), Walmsley proposes an alternative evaluation model based on a cultural organisation's mission.

> If an organisation's mission is, say, 'to delight and challenge audiences' rather than to maximise profit, the value should be created, identified and evaluated by the impact the company's work has on the people who engage with it, as measures against these goals (2013, p. 5).

To accurately evaluate a system of cultural value creation and shared meaning making, Walmsley suggests focussing on responses of individual members of the public who have engaged with an organisation as a creator, user or consumer of experiences delivered by the organisation. Success is defined by how closely that public assessment meets or aligns with the mission of the organisation (hence 'neo-institutional value') (2013, p. 6).

This research strategy is also influenced by another audience-based active-research approach investigated by Walmsley called 'deep hanging out', which brings together researchers with members of the public to co-experience a cultural event (2016). In collaboration, they are able to explore responses and value perceptions as they are experienced. However, this presents a range of ethical and methodological challenges disruptive of traditional research relationships. I decided for this case study that a more reflective semi-structured interview and open-ended survey program was potentially more informative and more practical within a library context. Allowing participants to articulate for themselves the quality of their cultural experience and the meaning it held for them addressed a gap in understanding which Walmsley identified thus:

> What we don't fully know is how people use the arts as a vehicle to engage with each other and with the world, and to discover their role and identity within it. So what is maybe more important and interesting is to seek out the rich textures and depth of subjective accounts of people's experiences with the arts and then try to capture how they feel about them (2016, p. 287).

Walmsley's conclusions therefore support Selwood's (2002, p. 70) and Holden's (2009, p. 454) view mentioned previously, that if we are to understand the value of cultural experience, we

should ask those who are experiencing it. Together, these conclusions provide the grounding and direction for this research. Knowledge cultivation and transfer implicit within the library experience is, I argue, collaborative, involving the institution's expertise in conservation, collections management and access, creating relationships and interpretive bridges that can be considered unique, priceless and irreplaceable. This leads to an exploration of the phenomenological aspects of the library experience, to examine if the public continue to play a role in shaping the library today.

### 3.2.3  Playing a part

Walmsley describes the significance of his principal research area, theatre, as 'a collective phenomenon with a tradition of creating public value' which allows for 'the centrality of the audience member to the theatre-making process, whether in a modern context of co-creation or in a traditionally spectatorial role' (2013, p. 6). I propose that the State Library can be considered in the same light, whereby the value and purpose of the institution is activated and realised when the public engage with it.

Communities of meaning and value generation form within and around cultural institutions such as galleries, museums, theatres and libraries. The subjective experience of a collective of individuals supports what Walmsley describes as the facilitation of 'shared experiences and meaning-making' (2013, p. 10). This process feeds one of the key sociocultural benefits of institutional value, whereby the experience delivers on public expectations regarding access to the site, expertise and collections, whilst supporting the development and dissemination of new knowledge and common values.

Walmsley proposes that the authentic evaluation of value creation and shared meaning making requires 'a transformation of the 'mono-directional production chain' for which traditional management models were designed into 'a multi-directional network of dialogues' (2013, p. 6). The quality of such dialogues and interactions over time are crucial to the visitor experience in both libraries and theatre. These dialogues and service transactions take place between individuals, across organisations and beyond into the public sphere. As will be discussed, the impact of the State Library has ramifications beyond its immediate transaction with members of the public, who described how the institution is 'simply a vital part of Adelaide's cultural fabric' and 'I love that it's there. It is a source of civic pride'.

This case study applies Walmsley's user-oriented, qualitative approach to evaluation of theatre audiences to the public experience of the State Library of South Australia. Looking at theatre's functional components or roles and their corresponding equivalents in the State Library, a consonance is apparent, reflecting a similar 'network of dialogue and expertise involved'. The table below shows how this can be accomplished:

| Value agent category for a theatre company | Equivalent value agent category for the State Library of South Australia |
|---|---|
| Audience | Members of the public – on site and online |
| Subscribers | The Friends of the State Library |
| Performers | Visitor Services – front of house & volunteers |
| Creators | Librarians, Curators & Archivists |
| Directors | Chief Executive & Leadership Team |
| Producers | The Libraries Board of SA & and Government |

**Table 1 Comparable value agents active in the creation of Institutional Value.**

The roles listed on either side of Table 1 ensure the delivery of the experience produced by the cultural organisation to the public, thereby creating 'value'. The success of individual agents reflects the goals of individual positions, as well as the overall mission of the organisation. As such each individual will have a responsibility to other roles to deliver to the best of their ability, especially if the other member of the organisation is dependent on their work. In the case of the library, this connectivity and interdependence extends not only across the organisation but over a comparatively long period of time. The ability of staff today to provide access to material for a member of the public is dependent on how well collection managers and librarians have conducted their roles in the past. The physical integrity and accessibility of that material may have been the responsibility of individuals within the library for decades, professionals who have trained and agreed to apply their skills to ensure that material in their care will be available for decades to come, as specified in the organisation's mission statement.

Walmsley describes how 'this neo-institutionalist' perspective prescribes a sociological view of organisations, considering their interaction with, and impact on, society (2013, p. 7). This better reflects the fluidity and interconnectedness of the creative and cultural experience within the State Library for individual users and the broader community, especially in the context of the

North Terrace Cultural Precinct. The complex network of relationships and associated processes enables public engagement with either the physical library site or the collections online, to create meaning and facilitate the exchange of knowledge (the State Library 'user experience'). This in turn informs the development of subjective meaning and value for the individual member of the public and public value more broadly across the Adelaide cultural ecology, potentially across generations. Engaging the public participating in the cultural experience delivered by the institution in this case study provides significant insights into the matrix of values supporting that experience. The neo-institutional approach guiding this research connects for the first time the value that the State Library believe they contribute, with the value the community believes it is receiving.

## 3.3   History, heritage and the value of continuity

Following Burawoy's extended case study approach, and drawing on survey and interview respondents, it is important to explore the history of the State Library and the physical development of its site in order to appreciate the cultural meaning it symbolizes for the people of South Australia today. This affective connection to the site emerged from the data, making it necessary to present a concept of heritage value. Gillman provides a working framework for understanding what people are referring to when they speak of heritage and the symbolic meaning it indicates, proposing that:

> Cultural symbolism derives from relationships between people, values, practices, places, events, memories, records, stories and objects; consequently, particular objects may have symbolic but not monetary value... Without notable historical context, a mid-eighteenth-century English bronze bell would command relatively little on the market... But if the Liberty Bell itself came to auction, institutional and private bidders would compete vigorously for this principal symbol of democratic freedoms (2001, p. 39).

The symbolic value perceived by the State Library's users connects them to the history of South Australia, and thus their community identity. Incorporating the narrative history of the State Library within this thesis is a means of generating the thick description suggested by Patton to contextualise the primary data provided by interviewees and survey respondents (2002, p. 437). Though a complete history of the State Library is beyond the scope of this thesis, an examination of its importance over two time periods – British settlement and today – demonstrates the origins of the institution and how the values that informed its early incarnations are still evident today. The public's appreciation of the State Library's continuity and evolution, from an exclusive colonial 'club' regulating social and moral values to the inclusive accessible public institution today, is one

of the most interesting insights gathered for this case study, adding to the significance and meaning the institution represents for the public. This overview is presented as the opening section of Part 2: Evidence of Value, grounding the survey results and profiles of value developed from the interviews within the context of a broad historical narrative. This historical narrative also demonstrates one of the essential considerations when addressing the value of cultural collections and institutions: the role played by time.

## 3.4    Symbolic Interaction

Without an understanding of how members of the public interact with the State Library in its many guises – as a harbour from the weather, a trusted source of information or meeting point for cultural or social exchange – it is not possible to fully account for what it means or represents to users. Patton describes 'symbolic interaction' as an analytical lens that could be applied to a wide variety of human relationships and interactions, such as the library experience:

> It is a perspective that places great emphasis on the importance of meaning and interpretation as essential human processes in reaction against behavioural and mechanical stimulus-response psychology. People create shared meanings through their interactions, and these meanings become their reality (2002, p. 112).

To gain an understanding of this range of subjective meanings perceived by the public, I adopted a research strategy that, following Walmsley, allows researchers to 'observe and work with people to reach general propositions about human behaviour' (2016, p. 276). Patton also proposes that the principal motivation for this open style of qualitative research is key to gaining an insight into a publics' relationship with complex institutions, and what they represent to their communities:

> The importance of symbolic interactionism to qualitative inquiry is its distinct emphasis on the importance of symbols and the interpretative processes that undergird interactions as fundamental to understanding human behaviour. For program evaluation, organizational development, and other applied research, the study of the original meaning and influence of symbols and shared meanings can shed light on what is most important to people, what will be most resistant to change and what will be most necessary to change if the program or organization is to move in new directions (2002, p. 113).

The shared meaning (and thus 'reality') that members of the public co-create with and through their interaction with the State Library, is a major component of its public value. This highlights two methodological issues:

1. The importance of respecting the use of natural or 'emic' language and the everyday expressions of participants, without subsuming these by the terms of abstract, 'etic' research methodologies; [20] and

2. The need to develop a bespoke approach to data analysis and the representation of findings to explore its potential to a sector often ill-equipped to invest in expensive visitor evaluation programs.

Not conducting interviews through the lens of policy-prescribed KPIs respects the meaning and intent of interview respondents, avoiding the risk of interpreting the data according to external evaluation frameworks. Instead, this research project had the freedom to assess public perceptions of value in their own terms using a robust and well-grounded approach that aimed to provide a contextualised set of articulations, categorised by theme, to present what matters most to the public.

## 3.5   Primary Data Gathering Strategy

In accordance with the neo-institutional approach, I undertook the data collection and analysis using qualitative mixed-methods and analytical techniques drawn from various social sciences and based on recommendations identified in the cultural value literature.

Data for this analysis was gathered using 3 channels:

1. An online survey developed using the digital data gathering and analysis platform, SurveyMonkey. The link to this survey was sent out through the State Library's eNewsletter with an accompanying invitation and introduction to my research project. This channel generated 33 respondents.

2. The same survey was printed out and distributed in hardcopy form in various open public spaces where they would be accessible, but not intrusive, to members of the public.

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[20] The terms 'etic' and 'emic' are used in anthropology to describe the cognitive perspectives of external researcher (emic) and the internal subject (etic). Lahlou (2011, p. 611) describes the distinctions between the two terms and the methodological implications for interpretation of phenomena thus: 'the core of the problem is that we want to describe the experience of the insider, which is inevitably constructed from one's own cultural and personal history, into an interpretation that could be transferable into someone else's life world'. What the observer records may not have the same meaning for the subject of the observation. For example; Kelman (2017) found with his research into the impact of Culture Counts to evaluate local multicultural arts performances, that the emic language and approach used to gather data was a barrier for both creative participants and audiences with migrant backgrounds and thus were unable to articulate the value of their (etic) experience in terms that would fit the external modelling. See also Harris (1976).

Respondents could complete the surveys privately at their convenience before returning them to the Flinders University survey assistants on site. This channel generated a further 51 responses.

3. An incentivised program of semi-structured interviews with members of the public, designed to capture more in-depth and personalised responses using open-ended questions. The invitation to participate in the interviews was included in the hardcopy survey and resulted in 14 public interview subjects. These short five to ten-minute interviews were recorded and transcribed by the author and Laboratory Adelaide research assistants.

This qualitative data collection strategy aligns with the neo-institutional approach of gathering evidence of value from those most closely associated with the State Library, represented in their natural language. The surveys and interviews captured what Walmsley describes as 'modes of being with the (library), rather than the specific benefits or meaning they derive from them' (2016, p. 10).

### 3.5.1 A Two Stage approach

Qualitative data used to inform this case study was collected over two periods. The first was collected as part of the Laboratory Adelaide Project between 2013 and 2015. This consisted of surveys completed by event audiences and interviews with senior executives and management leaders within the library. The aim of this round of data collection was to identify how the library captured and communicated its value to internal and external stakeholders and whether this was perceived to be accurate and productive.

The first round of interviews was used by Laboratory Adelaide to identify how commercial management modelling imposed by government had become a major challenge for the meaningful reporting of value within the library (see Meyrick et al, 2019). According to one executive interview subject, the focus on numbers and the absence of 'the whole story' was warping subsequent communications across the sector. Another subject suggested that strategic decisions had been made based on assumptions about what the public wanted, rather than on evidence that is meaningful for both the organisation and the public:

> We make decisions without actually understanding what we're making a decision on …
> activity, to use, to money, to queries and how the customers engage with it, tell people
> about it … none of that is collected anywhere so we make decisions based on what we think
> we know, without actually knowing it.

Such insights from those working at the State Library demonstrate the challenges involved with identifying value and capturing information about it through the primary facilitators of value generation in cultural institutions: those who deliver it as part of their daily jobs. The voices of members of the public – those who co-create value through their subjective engagement with the library services, sites and events – have on occasion been captured via marketing surveys. However, their perceptions of value were limited to prescribed options based on preferences provided by the library executive. Though appropriate for marketing purposes, the design of these surveys limited opportunities to:

- garner new and authentic articulations of individual value;
- understand how these articulations are informed by previous experiences with the State Library or other libraries;
- note any suggestions which may support or improve value delivery; and
- allow for random aspirations for the library from its visiting public.

Gilmore et al observe that the major drawback with engaging marketing-based evaluation techniques in the cultural sector is that they are 'more successful in capturing data to confirm existing perceptions and values, than necessarily introducing new insights into the organisations' activities' (2017, p. 288). An evaluation strategy not rooted in public experience perpetuates the consequences of decisions based on what one staff interview subject described as 'what we think we know, without actually knowing it'. Combined with the range of literature suggesting that there was a greater role for the public voice in identifying public value in a cultural context, I elected to focus on this gap in the existing research for this case study.

The Laboratory Adelaide team also conducted surveys of audiences through two streams of special interest events:

- the *Tangent* program, a series of talks based on State Theatre company production, and
- *Genealogy Gems*, the regular family history research events.

These two event streams presented opportunities to discuss the aims of the research project directly with the public, offering points of access and increased visibility. However, this opportunity was gained at the cost of narrowing the sampling field to two separate, though not unrelated, groups of library stakeholders. They were not representative of the full range of visitors to or users of the library. This first round of interviews and survey sampling thus proved too

purposive, creating a false probability risk if scaled up. The findings were based on data that, though rich and insightful, was hampered by perspectival and experiential limitations. The demographic analysis of this first round of survey respondents revealed them to be 90% female, 87% over 50 years of age and 60% retired. This did not reflect observations of the members of the public within the library on any given day. I observed the general public to be younger in appearance and of an even gender ratio. I concluded that the data gathered by Laboratory Adelaide reflected the event going audience, rather than the general daily users of the library services. This unintentionally homogenous sampling minimised variation and did not provide for the breadth of public experience required to address my key research questions. In response, I devised a maximum variation sampling strategy based on the approach recommended by Patton. This offset this risk whilst still allowed for the capture of value articulations and identification of common themes amongst a relatively small pool of data:

> For small samples, a great deal of heterogeneity can be a problem because individual cases are so different from each other. The maximum variation sampling strategy turns that apparent weakness into a strength by applying the following logic: Any common patterns that emerge from great variation are of particular interest and value in capturing the core experiences and central, shared dimensions of a setting or phenomenon (2002, p. 235).

My demographic observations of the State Library public are supported by Kells, who celebrates a library public's resistance to easy demographic classification, describing them as 'typically and uncooperatively diverse' (2017, p. 268). Given this diversity of the State Library's public, the maximum variation sampling strategy described by Patton offered the greatest potential for identifying common themes from value articulations emerging from the survey and interview responses from the library's public.

### 3.5.2   Staff Interviews, ethics modification and a focus on the public

Although the first-round interviews with staff conducted by the Laboratory Adelaide team provided valuable insights at a time of organisational transition, they did not speak of the audience experience with the objectivity this case study required. Presenting the staff interviews as narrative profiles of value, the approach taken with the public interview subjects, also posed serious methodological issues. As these interview subjects were employees or executives with the library, their relationship to the institution was based on a different premise. Where the public were involved in a voluntary and unconditional relationship with the institution, the staff members, though clearly tied to the organisation by vocational and personal attachments, were operating under a set of contractual obligations and expectations. After careful consideration and

analysis of their responses, the values as expressed by the individuals and the values as expressed in accordance with their role specifications, became indistinguishable, thereby rendering them problematic to represent as articulations of value, rather than professional imperatives or functions of their roles.

In response to these challenges, I devised a new interview program consisting of:

- a set of follow up interviews with members of the executive team from the first round to explore points they had raised relating to the visitor experience; and
- a new round of semi-structured interviews with a more diverse range of staff members targeting those with daily experiences interacting with the general public, the collections and of event audiences.

The second more-targeted program of interviews required adjustments to the ethics application covering the Laboratory Adelaide research phase, covering the intention to also engage with random daily visitors to the library. Approval to offer a free cup of coffee as an incentive to interview participants recognised their contribution to this research project and to increase the chances of capturing a wide pool of participants without interrupting their activity. Taking place over two days at the library (Tuesday 6 and Thursday 8 of December 2017), 14 interviews with 15 members of the public were conducted. These interviews were guided by a set of questions but were not so rigid as to limit responses. They we deliberately conversational and unstructured, a form of interview described by Punch as:

> The non-standardised, open-ended, in-depth interview, sometimes called the ethnographic interview. It is used as a way of understanding the complex behaviour of people without imposing any a priori categorisation which might limit the field of inquiry. It is also used to explore people's interpretations of meanings of events and situations, and their symbolic and cultural significance (2013, p. 147).

I adopted a similar conversational and open interview style for the new round of interviews with staff members, who were selected in consultation with team leaders within the library. This 'snowball' or chain sampling is recommended as an appropriate method to identify the most productive and informed interview subjects when sampling from a broad field (Patton 2002, p237). The chain sampling approach was adopted as a means of preventing disgruntled staff members from using the interview as a platform to air grievances, distract the researchers involved and obstruct the project. As the State Library was undergoing a contentious restructure, and facing the possibility of industrial action, there were difficulties with undertaking a research

program at this time. Nevertheless, the selection process commenced via the Director who facilitated communication with the senior executive, who delegated the task to the Human Resources team. This office was responsible for rostering staff across all operational areas and was best placed to judge subjects' availability, expertise and perspective, whilst posing the least risk of disrupting library services and maintaining positive and productive communication channels. This process resulted in 16 interviews with 12 library team members, producing insightful articulations concerning:

- the role and value of the library from the staff members' perspective
- evidence of the challenges and successes that often go unsung in reports or conversation about the role of the library; and
- the persistent motivation to serve the public good over time, which is characteristic of many working to preserve collections and facilitate cultural experiences for the public.

This body of data contributed by the staff members and volunteers, represents a future research opportunity beyond the capacity of this thesis. Although the staff interviews were rich in insights into organizational priorities, and the interconnectedness of professional functions, I considered that the positions held by interview subjects influenced their perceptions of value generated by the library. I was also concerned by the uncertainty surrounding their ability to remain neutral and apolitical. This concern may have been unfounded and possibly derived from my previous experiences of the complex web of personal and professional relationships prevalent within cultural institutions. Instead, as recommended in the literature, I decided to focus the analysis on the public perspective as offering the greatest potential for understanding experiences which activate public value in a cultural context. The resulting qualitative mixed-methods strategy driving this research engages the public perspective to understand the value and meaning of a cultural institution, in line with Kaszynska's argument that:

> Producing an adequate understanding of cultural value will require a better account of the actual experiences on the basis of which judgements of cultural worth are being made. … theories of cultural value ought to be grounded in and shaped by first-order experiential data. (2015, p. 263).

Focussing on the public perspective grounds this research in such 'first order experiential data', subverting prevalent top-down and prescriptive approaches to understanding cultural value.

### 3.5.3   Public survey strategy

I developed a maximum variation sampling plan, as suggested by Punch (2014), Richards (2010) and Riessman (2008), distributing a survey designed to capture expressions of value from the general or daily public. I selected a survey as the most appropriate tool to gather my data within the context of the State Library, as it allowed participants to reflect on their experience without disrupting it, providing time for reflection and recognition. As Reason suggests:

> Reflective consciousness in and of the moment … is impossible because it radically transforms that moment into something other. However, within a phenomenological perspective that other has value and meaning in its own right, as it is through conscious reflection that individuals make sense and invest meaning in their experiences (2010, p. 21).

The aim of this survey program was to reach as broad a range of library users as possible, rather than focussing on niche audiences attending public events who, though passionate in their belief in the value of the library, did not reflect the diversity of daily users. Hard copies of the survey were placed around various workspaces and reading areas within the library over two days in October 2017, encouraging members of the public to complete in their own time without interrupting their experience. The survey was also distributed with a short article about this project to the library's newsletter subscribers, to capture responses from the State Library's online user group who access the digital collections remotely. This invitation was sent out twice over the course of six months in 2017. In order to broaden the sampling base further, a link to the survey invitation was sent out via personal social media channels, encouraging friends, academics and arts sector colleagues to either complete the survey themselves or repost through their social media channels. The survey strategy resulted in the collection of data from 84 respondents. Some demographic data was collected as part of this survey – gender, age, employment status, income level and level of education. These results have been retained for future work but were not included in the analysis as I thought it may impact on the interpretation through unconscious bias. My focus is on the quality of the public experience, which is not necessarily related to age or economic bracket. These data points are of more interest to marketing and promotional strategies, rather than this kind of qualitative analysis. The survey questions which form the basis of this analysis are:

1. What was the main purpose for your visit to the State Library of South Australia today?
2. How often to you visit?
3. Approximately how long do you spend in the library on an average visit?

4. What benefits do you think the State Library of South Australia creates for you and/or the Adelaide community?

5. What is your earliest memory of attending any library?

6. What is your earliest (or best) memory of attending THIS library?

7. What does the State Library of South Australia mean to you now?

8. How does the library support, service or contribute to your main purpose for visiting today?

9. Is there something else you would like to tell us about what the State Library of South Australia means to you?

The questions were crafted in an open-ended style to encourage conscious reflection and elicit personal symbolic meanings from respondents which, according to Patton, offers the opportunity 'to understand the world as seen by respondents':

> The purpose of gathering responses to open-ended questions is to enable the researcher to understand and capture the points of view of other people without predetermining those points of view through prior selection of questionnaire categories. As Lofland (1971, p. 7) put it: 'To capture participants 'in their own terms' one must learn their categories for rendering explicable and coherent the flux of raw quality. That, indeed, is the first principle of qualitative analysis (original italics) (2002, p. 21).

Though offering the possibility of capturing public articulations of value to support this neo-institutional inquiry, Patton also warned that the open-ended methods resulted in data that was more difficult to analyse, as 'qualitative findings are longer, more detailed, and variable in content; analysis is difficult because responses are neither systematic nor standardised' (2002, p. 21). However, given the relatively small representative pool of survey responses, I felt this was the best course to pursue; the approach would illustrate the challenges involved with the application of qualitative multidisciplinary methodologies to audience evaluation. This, I thought, may offer the potential to understand why institutions and government departments may be reluctant to engage with them in favour of the reductive simplicity of platform based evaluation tools.

### 3.5.4 Survey Tools

Most surveys were collected using SurveyMonkey, a simple and accessible data collection program available for this research through the Laboratory Adelaide Project. SurveyMonkey enabled me to code each survey response with thematic categories. In most instances, the responses could be coded with more than one category, depending on the context and meaning of the response. I was then able to generate a simple graph to illustrate which response theme was more prominent

for each question. (These graphs are included in the data analysis in Chapter 5). This simple analysis, however, did little to reflect the meaning and significance conveyed by the terms and expression of the respondents: many included humour or deeply emotive narrative snapshots while others were recorded in broken English. Nor did a graph convey anything like the nuanced diversity of responses for each question. I wanted to be able to represent the subjective nature of the responses, the individuality and humanity many of them conveyed. These qualities could not be captured by either the graphic summary or word cloud facility – such functions offer little value for a qualitative interpretation beyond ascertaining trends or indicators of popularity. Instead, I manually pasted a copy of individual responses to each question on a separate Excel spreadsheet. These groups formed clusters of similar responses gathered from different respondents. The unique identifier of each respondent was also placed alongside the cluster to demonstrate how many people had nominated that form of value in response to the question. Some respondents provided value articulations which included three or four different themes, subthemes or meanings. This simple and accessible method allowed for a count to be made, showing how many types of value articulations were identified and perceived by respondents to each question.

## 3.6 Data analysis

Given the open-ended nature of the survey questions, it was neither desirable nor possible to align the responses against prescribed indicators or scales, such as a common ranking of value, or policy-driven indicators. This stage of the research required an organizational framework that had the capacity to:

- reflect the qualitative nature of the responses,
- connect the State Library experience with cultural value theory, and
- retain the emic language and expressions of the survey respondents as recommended by the qualitative evaluation literature.

My approach varies from other options available, such as the Cultural Development Network's Planning & Evaluation Framework in two significant ways (2018). First, I am operating under the premise that the experience of the State Library holds latent intrinsic value, the accumulated expertise of generations of staff, the collection, the past acts of preservation and the ongoing facilitation of access to quality trusted information. Second, my surveys were open-ended and not prescribed by a pre-existing schema which assume that 'All activity can be considered as initiating in one or other of those domains, and all outcomes can also be categorised within them' (Dunphy

& Smithies, 2018). Rather, my approach was descriptive, organised around themes and value associations. Some of these originated in the neo-institutional value literature, others emerged from the data.

### 3.6.1   Rationale

The purpose here is not only to conduct an experiment into cost effective alternatives to digital evaluation and analytics; my strategy is aimed at exploring the ongoing relationship between an organisation or institution and their publics, and if this can be maintained and understood directly, without the mediating effects and additional expense involved with engaging third parties. This addresses a conclusion drawn by Dave O'Brien, whereby:

> The intersection of culture and its political economy is a space for the arts and humanities to display their worth. The acts of audit and measurement, the social scientific techniques of government and the commodified transactions of the ideal consumer are insufficiently understood on their own terms and in their own languages… Humanities research can illuminate the moments when audits, social science and markets are appropriate and why they are appropriate to understand complex social phenomena such as culture. Crucially, they can illustrate when those approaches do not make sense, by placing them in their appropriate historical and cultural contexts, or revealing their theoretical or philosophical limitations (2015, p. 93).

For this case study seeking to understand cultural value generated by an institution and its public, it was appropriate to adopt an approach based in the Humanities to maintain the balance between the pressures of economic rationalism, political expedience and social responsibility faced by the State Library.

As a practitioner, I've experienced a range of operational environments across cultural and public service organisations of varying scale and funding levels. The IT infrastructure and equipment (WIFI access, database management systems and desktop computers) available within these diverse environments has been equally varied and, in some recent instances, supplemented by the use of contractors' home or personal laptops. Full time or in-house technical support was available only within major state-run institutions. Likewise, outside major institutions, financial management or accounting support was limited to pro-bono or part-time arrangements. With these experiences in mind, I was interested to learn if it would be possible to conduct a robust audience evaluation programme using the limited tools and expertise available across the sector,

without the additional cost-burdens of annual subscriptions to online digital platforms such as Culture Counts,[21] or outsourced to third party consultants.[22]

My approach entails not only simple data gathering techniques, but also a simplified and accessible means of organising and analysing the results. This approach bore a resemblance to digital data analysis methodologies, such as NVivo, which is used widely in Humanities and Social Sciences departments within universities for academic purposes. However, in my experience, they are not often used or accessible within the arts and cultural sector. A range of options were available to me through the university, such as emotions and statistical analysis programs. However, I was not certain that these tools had the flexibility and capacity to capture qualitative nuance and the tone of the language and phrasing of participants. It became clear after the data gathering that a significant proportion of survey respondents were learning English as a second language. My choice of an inductive thematic approach was also influenced by my use of humour and empathy during the interview process, creating an environment of comfort and openness. The most significant investment made in this analysis was time, a commodity often scarce across both the tertiary and cultural sectors.

### 3.6.2   Theme development

Survey responses were gathered in person and online then entered onto SurveyMonkey. This enabled a flexible inductive thematic analysis of the responses, as described by Clarke and Braun, using the colour-coding facility to tag similar responses to connect to emergent themes (2017, p. 298). These colour tags, however, needed to reflect appropriate neo-institutional categories of value in order to function as a well-grounded analytical starting point for organizing the data. For this I returned to the literature to establish a foothold.

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[21] According to correspondence with Culture Counts (dated 8 October 2019), the annual subscription to the platform costs $1500.00 and is accompanied by a range of confidentiality clauses. Their terms and conditions specify that subscribers to Culture Counts are discouraged from disclosing any information regarding their experience of Culture Counts: '8. Confidential Information; Non-Disparagement. a. You agree that the Subscription Software and any information concerning the Subscription Software (including its nature and existence, features, functionality, and screen shots), the User Groups, and any other information disclosed by Culture Counts to you in connection with the Subscription Program will be considered and referred to in this Agreement as "Confidential Information."'

[22] The Western Australian Government announced that the Culture Counts app saved arts organisations in receipt of recurrent government funding $950,000 per year in consultant fees. This sum is an indicator of the amount spent in WA on external evaluation consultants each year, and is more than six times the annual government funding underwriting the last cultural organisation I worked for. Culture Counts is supplied free of charge to these organisations as part of their funding arrangements with Department of Culture and the Arts.

Walmsley had drawn upon the Arts Audience Experience Index (AAEI) developed by Radbourne, Glow and Johansson, which they describe as being:

> Conceived as a qualitative tool to access audience feedback on quality, as formally defined in terms of quality indicators… the first tool developed to measure the intrinsic experience, similar to well-being and quality of life indexes used to measure liveable cities and community well-being. The Index identifies the priority of each of the … indicators to the audience of each participating organization, and then examines the extent to which the organization maximizes attributes of the indicators (2010, p. 313).

The four quality indicators scaffolding the Arts Audience Experience Index are: Knowledge transfer or learning; Risk management; Authenticity; and Collective engagement. These indicators were derived, like much of the literature, from audiences engaged with theatre or festival performance contexts rather than library experiences. However, this framework offered a robust and tested set of organizing categories of value to support my analysis, as well as to:

- Build on existing theory related to cultural value, thus making a contribution to the Laboratory Adelaide project; and
- Preserve the emic language of participants, thereby maintaining their meaning in narrative non-metricised interpretive form.

Extending on the work of Radbourne, Glow and Johansson (2009, 2010), and others (Brown & Novak, 2007; New Economics Foundations, 2008; White & Hede, 2008), Walmsley identifies a range of 'audience perceptions of value' from 'mixed method studies into the audience experience'. These perceptions of value are articulated in the following terms:

> Emotional impact, stimulation and flight; engagement and captivation; knowledge and risk; authenticity and collective engagement; learning and challenge; energy and tension; shared experience and atmosphere; personal resonance and inspiration; empowerment and renewal; aesthetic growth and self-actualization; improved social skills, better relationships and family cohesion … [previous studies] place audiences at the heart of the artistic value debate and made a powerful case for the role of qualitative research in illuminating the value of arts experience (2013, p. 7).

The neo-institutional sets of audience perceptions of value were used as a starting point to ground the thematic analysis of survey responses from State Library users within the arts evaluation literature. The research became inductive, rather than a prescribed or deductive approach which looks for data to fit pre-existing theoretical categories (Clarke & Braun, 2017). In line with this approach, the AAEI themes were then adapted to suit the data, acting as descriptive organizational categories to aid analysis, rather than prescriptive categories to be ranked or selected by the public to interpret their experience. The adoption of a thematic analysis approach

enabled the application of more than one category to the same response, demonstrating the layered and connected nature of the interpretation. It also allowed for the separation of meanings within the one response, generating a total of 2705 value articulations from the 7 open-ended survey questions from 84 respondents.

I adapted the AAEI thematic framework over the course of the analysis to better reflect the data at hand, rather than forcing or artificially interpreting meanings to suit the categories. I modified some of the original terms to better reflect the library experience. Some were removed as too personal and subjective to be accessible or comparative. Others were merged to form new categories, such as: a) 'personal resonance and inspiration' was merged with 'engagement and captivation' to form 'Inspiration'. 'Empowerment and renewal' was merged with 'aesthetic growth & transformation' to form 'Self-improvement and Transformation'. This combination had the added benefit of reflecting both the qualities of responses and historic links to the self-education and mutual improvement societies from which the library was formed.

Table 2 below lists neo-institutional quality indicators identified by Walmsley (2013. P. 7) and the quality indicators developed by Radbourne et al (2009, 2010) aligned against the categories of value developed inductively to organise the articulations made by the survey respondents. This 'lineage' illustrates the origins of the terms and adjustments made to reflect the responses.

| Radbourne et al (2010, p. 314): Audience Experience Quality Indicators and their Attributes | Walmsley (2013, p. 7): Summary of audience perceptions of value identified in neo-institutional studies | Categories of public value of the State Library identified here using inductive thematic analysis |
|---|---|---|
| **Knowledge transfer or learning:** 'Contextual programming… information…talks… These strategies function to facilitate new understandings, linking experience to self-knowledge, and self-development in audience members'. | - Aesthetic growth & self-actualization<br>- Learning & challenge<br>- Improved social skills, better relationships & family cohesion | - Education<br>- Self-improvement & transformation |
| **Risk management:** 'Commitment to managing risk, through programme knowledge, previews, comfort and accessibility, personalized communication, quality guarantee expectation, value for money'. | - Knowledge & risk<br>- Empowerment & renewal | - Civic trust & public service<br>- Community resource & site value |
| **Authenticity:** 'Capacity to achieve believability, meaning and representation, sincerity, performance matches promotional description, performers engage in own | - Emotional impact, stimulation & flight;<br>- Engagement & captivation; | - Inspiration<br>- Quiet escape & security |

| performances, performers' relationship with audience'. | - Energy & tension;<br><br>- Personal resonance & inspiration | |
|---|---|---|
| **Collective engagement:**<br><br>'Ensuring expectations of social contact and inclusion are met, including shared experience, social constructs and meaning, common values, live experience, interaction or understanding between performers and audience, clues to behaviour, discussion after the performance'. | - Authenticity & collective engagement;<br><br>- Shared experience & atmosphere | - Social/Cultural connection & exchange<br><br>- Heritage & continuity |

**Table 2: Lineage of neo-institutional perceptions of value.**

This method of data analysis also allowed for unpredictable value categories to develop and resulted in a new thematic category – Heritage & Continuity – to emerge. More than an appreciation of the architecture or historical associations, which indeed influence public perceptions, this emergent type of value relates to the ongoing nature of the public experience. This category reflects the significance generated by the life-long and transgenerational relationships between the institution and the State Library's users. These living relationships create a deep level of connection with the institution, are temporally ambiguous, are built up and coalesced over time to imbue that site and the experience with personal significance.[23] They are relationships unique to each individual but shared collectively with others with similar values and needs. This category of value is not frequently mentioned or clearly evident in the literature drawn upon for this case study and will be discussed in the following chapter.

I wanted to see if these clusters of similar value articulations formed a narrative around the organisational themes, thinking of the clusters as miniature snapshots of the many layers or levels with which the Library Public value their experience. What will be presented is a set of intricately networked value relationships which are more reflective of a cultural experience, rather than a single expression of one isolated kind of value. Each articulation of value is connected to another, as one library experience relates to previous visits over the lifetime of the visitor. The value is cumulative and, in some instances, transgenerational.

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[23] David Throsby (2000) addressed heritage value as a contributor to cultural value, asserting that heritage values must be incorporated into financial evaluations of built structures and culturally significant sites. He also describes historical value as that which connects people to the past and explains the present and contributes to identity formation (p. 85). In this case study, however, the perceptions of value provided by survey respondents reflect how the public values the continuity of experience and connection with family members and historical figures over time through the site, which are considered more personal and thus distinct from Throsby's descriptions.

My approach to data analysis engages an inductive thematic approach, commencing with and then adapting arts audience perceptions of value identified by Walmsley (2013) and Radbourne, Glow & Johansson (2010) to create a set of 8 major themes to categorise the public perceptions and articulations of value. These major themes are subsequently adapted to suit the State Library Public responses and best present the data. In their final form, these themes are: Community Resource / Site Value; Self-improvement & Transformation; Social & Cultural Connection or Exchange; Quiet Escape & Security; Inspiration; Education; Civic Trust & Public Service; and the new theme developed to accommodate this case study, Heritage & Continuity. A description of the meaning of these major themes, with illustrative examples of public responses, is included as Appendix 1. To clarify how this this process was conducted, Table 4 (below) presents an excerpt from the database.

| NEO INST TERMINOLOGY | STATE LIBRARY CATEGORIES | SUBTHEME (WHAT Perception of Value) (associations) | SUBTOTAL | CLUSTERS OF VISITOR TERMS (HOW is the VP expressed) | REFERENCE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Emotional impact, stimulation, flight** | **Quiet Escape & Security** | Sanctuary | 3 | Chance to spend quality time on my own. A pleasant place for me to visit for a few hours to lose myself. A place to be in my own space and escape from the world. | S2#81, S2#80, S2#67 |
| | | Possession / Belonging | 3 | 2nd house (sic). I just love it, I would be very upset not to have this wonderful place to go to. It means many things to me. I live in the country and it is a 3 hour drive to get there, but we are so fortunate to have such a wonderful asset. It is a place where I want to go. | S2#47, S2#35, S2#83 |
| | | Environment & Facilities | 5 | Spaces to just sit and read / study, beautiful surroundings, nice toilets. A place where I can quietly work, can come anytime. A convenient place to relax. Quiet, useful and great area. One of good places where I have good quality experiences. | S2#46, S2#45, S2#64, S2#43, S2#9, S2#2 |
| | | Focus | 1 | Concentrate on study. | S2#41 |
| | | Personal Identity & Aspiration | 4 | Honest friend. A place where I can be a better me. A place to feel free in it. A resource and also a source of pride. | S2#38, S2#37, S2#44, S2#5 |
| | | Safety | 2 | A place of safety and security. A safe space | S2#36, S2#33 |
| | | **SUBTOTAL** | **18** | | |

Table 3: Example of survey response Excel data base. This excerpt shows responses to Question 5 categorised under the major theme, Quiet Escape & Security.

All survey response data were arranged in the above manner in an Excel workbook consisting of a work sheet per question with a final sheet for the combined overviews. Excel offered the capacity to generate simple graphs, included in the following sections, to illustrate the most common major themes and value associations for each question, as well as a final overview of all the survey data. This commonly available software program allowed for the interrogation of the articulations of value collectively and:

- Confirmed the utility of the neo-institutional expressions of value identified in the literature (in the above example, 'Emotional impact, stimulation, flight')

- Identified an emergent category of value for the State Library ('Heritage & Continuity')

- Maintained the original language and value articulations of responses, copied verbatim from SurveyMonkey (second column from the right); and

- Preserved respondents' unique identifying numbers, allowing for tracking and crosschecking throughout the process.

I considered the greatest benefit of this approach would be the ability to identify within the data the public's preferred means of engaging with the State Library. This may also, I hoped, provide an indication as to how they engaged and related to the institution. Guided by this goal, as I manually copied every coded response from SurveyMonkey onto an Excel spreadsheet, I grouped similar responses within each theme into a single cell. This enabled a count of the value articulations evident within the responses to each question within a separate column, preserving both the syntactical context and the user's natural mode of expression (i.e. 'emic' terms). It also allowed for the identification of subthemes, which I've interpreted as far more significant for my finding than simple organising categories.

### 3.6.3   Subthemes as value associations

Several months after the initial data gathering phase, patterns became apparent amongst the subthemes, which I found applied across the major neo-institutional themes. These subthemes generated a more granular picture of what the major neo-institutional themes represented for the public. As common expressions and experiences emerged, I recognised that these subthemes represented more than common perceptions and could potentially offer a deeper insight into the value of the Library experience. Late in the analysis, I gave descriptive names to each of the subthemes. These drew upon some of the language of the respondents as well as the literature presented in the preceding chapter. This additional work built on the Visitor Survey Summary in Excel and resulted in a standardised list of value associations that could be traced back to the original SurveyMonkey platform using the unique respondent identifiers. Confirming standard terms for the subthemes also offered the opportunity to identify the most common value associations across all major themes and questions, providing a surprisingly clear view of how the public values the library and why.

A set of 52 common subthemes or 'value associations' emerged. They are listed in Table 3 below.

| SUBTHEMES: Public Value Associations (A-Z) - How the public ascribe value to or derive value from the State Library of South Australia. | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | Access | 19 | Flight | 37 | Peace & quiet |
| 2 | Aesthetic experience | 20 | Focus | 38 | Personal Identity & aspiration |
| 3 | Ancestry research | 21 | Formal Study | 39 | Personal projects |
| 4 | Behaviours | 22 | Free access | 40 | Possession & Belonging |
| 5 | Books | 23 | Freedom of thought | 41 | Public Events |
| 6 | Civic Engagement | 24 | Historic architechture | 42 | Public forum |
| 7 | Collections access | 25 | Historical collections access | 43 | Regeneration |
| 8 | Community Engagement | 26 | Historical interest | 44 | Relaxation & leisure |
| 9 | Community Identity | 27 | Independence / transition | 45 | Retensions & Protensions |
| 10 | Connection | 28 | Informal Study | 46 | Rumination |
| 11 | Creative Ideation | 29 | International | 47 | Safety |
| 12 | Cultural development | 30 | Job hunting | 48 | Sanctuary |
| 13 | Cultural Place Maker | 31 | Knowledge access | 49 | School library |
| 14 | Cultural tourism | 32 | Language skills | 50 | Service Provision & Experience |
| 15 | Enchantment | 33 | Legacy & Stewardship | 51 | State Library |
| 16 | Environment & Facilities | 34 | Lifetime connection | 52 | University library |
| 17 | Expertise & Integrity | 35 | Local community / Library | | |
| 18 | Family & childhood | 36 | Nonpareil / matchless | | |

**Table 4: List of subthemes, State Library of South Australia cultural value manifestations.**

Initially I applied standard titles to the emergent subthemes as a way of describing clusters of similar responses under each major theme. However, in the course of the analysis, they became more significant when considered as 'associations of value', or 'how the value of the library is manifested', as perceived by the public, adding a more nuanced level of data interpretation. As the work progressed I came to consider these subthemes as 'value associations'; how the public associate value with or ascribe value to the State Library. This realisation late in the thesis meant that formalising the subthemes became essential if they were to address my research questions, requiring a significant body of work, once tested as analytically robust and viable. I considered that the subthemes appeared to be more illustrative of value from the public perspective, rather than the major themes derived from the cultural value literature. After revisiting Walmsley's Deep Hanging Out research (2016), the question informing my analysis became 'do the subthemes or value associations represent how value is manifested at the State Library?'

The public's value associations, however, are not restricted to or defined by their alignment with a single major theme. Instead, they often related to more than one theme, and within that theme have an interpretive connection with other similar responses.

The implications of the second stage of analysis demonstrates the complexity involved with attempting to 'capture cultural value'; subjective articulations of value elicit multiple meanings

and connections across organising categories or themes. However, the second stage of analysis produced detailed and illustrative data, demonstrating a complex network of motivations and benefits experienced by individual members of the State Library public over time.

This survey strategy addresses issues identified in the literature concerning the perceived shortfalls of applying metrics-based evaluation tools to arts and cultural experiences (Gilmore et al, 2017; Phiddian et al, 2017). My data gathering approach for this case study demonstrates that high-quality information can be captured and analysed using tools and software readily available across the cultural sector, including small to medium organisations. Such a simplified approach, if successful, obviates the necessity of subscribing to costly external consultants and tightly regulated and conditioned impact evaluation dashboard systems, such as Culture Counts. This also demonstrates the value of inductive thematic methodologies to qualitative evaluation projects such as this thesis.

The Chapter 5 explores how the survey responses demonstrate the richness of individual experiences and the collective value they imply for the for the broader community and the State Library. The subthemes serve as a narrative bridge between the academic nature of the major themes and the natural language of the respondents. The complete workbook presenting the data for all survey questions is included as Appendix 2, while the Value Association summary is included as Appendix 3.

### 3.6.4   Interviews with the public

The survey data was complemented by a program of interviews conducted with members of the public visiting the State Library. This tranche of research was designed to further explore their responses to the survey questions and draw out extended meanings and deeper reflection concerning their experiences and value associations with the State Library. This direct engagement with members of the public reflected aspects of Walmsley's Deep Hanging Out approach, resulting in conversations with interview subjects which could be presented as summaries or 'narrative profiles of value':

> To ensure that each of the … co-researchers is represented by an authentic voice (and hence foreground subjectivity); the other is to tease out commonalities amongst all … co-researchers (and therefore attempt to sketch a more inter-subjective perception of cultural value) (2016, p. 7).

This method of re-presenting the authentic (unmodified) voices and values of public interviewees complemented the goals and context of this case study. It also falls within the acceptable

relational bounds described by Punch, whereby the researcher and researched become 'co-creators of data' (2014, p. 148).

A high proportion of interview subjects spoke English as a second language. This raised more concerns about applying digital analysis tools. Based on Kelman's observations, the reduction and removal of value terms from their context during digital analysis risks the loss of their meaning and unintentional modification:

> By presenting audience members with generic categories against which they were asked to ascribe a score, the nature of the performance experience would be changed and community dialogues of real significance and complexity would be shut down and reduced to a meaningless series of numerical scores … There is a real danger that imposing quantitative metrics on delicate and complex community arts events at best limit and at worst destroy an audience's ability to create their own meanings, leaving them disenfranchised by rigidly controlling the terms in which they can tell their story (2017, p. 10).

To offset this risk and preserve the hermeneutic focus of this case study, I summarised the interviews in line with Walmsley's approach, and present them in section 5.3 as 'narrative profiles of value'. I use direct quotes from members of the public to describe their experiences with the State Library in their own terms. A further reason for staying within an analogue register was that some comments were sensitive and emotionally charged, sharing personal stories about their families and backgrounds. To increase the comfort of interview participants, Punch suggests using humour and empathy, thereby:

> Minimising status differences between interviewer and respondent, and developing a more equal relationship based on trust that includes both self-disclosure by the researcher and reciprocity… [and] enabling greater openness and insight, a greater range of responses and therefore richer data (2014, p. 148).

This empathetic and subject-oriented approach to the evaluation of audience experience is also supported by White and Hede who propose the use of narrative inquiry and analysis as part of a qualitative study:

> Narrative inquiry is an appropriate method to situate the individual as central to the research and allow participants' definitional perspective of art and impact to be recorded. This produced both similar and alternate impacts of art beyond those uncovered in previous research adopting a priori approaches based on the definitional perspective implicit in government policies. The narrative inquiry and analysis uncovered knowledge regarding what enables impact to occur (2008, p. 32).

The narrative profiles of value are designed to capture and communicate the backstories of the State Library public to understand what informs the relationship between the public and the institution. However, they were conducted and summarised to redress the balance between

commercial values and the public perspective, a balance that Boorsma describes as the 'arts marketing pitfall', suggesting that 'there is some evidence that performance can also decline when arts organizations are too customer focussed' (2006, p. 74). My mixed-methodological strategy to qualitative data collection and analysis provides the hermeneutic perspective, one similar to what Patton describes as being 'aimed at enhancing understanding [by] relating parts to wholes, and wholes to parts', rather than furthering debates surrounding the intrinsic and instrumental value dichotomy (2002, p. 497).

### 3.6.5  An extended case with three lines of inquiry.

Given the overwhelming imperative to measure and articulate cultural value numerically, or instrumentally, designing a methodology to reclaim the language and multi-facetted nature of the audience experience has been a challenge. Often it has felt more like taking a step back in time to a pre-digital management practice than devising a new approach. However, in deliberately designing and pursuing a qualitative open-ended approach, I planned to avoid falling into Madden's 'misinterpreted authority', whereby commercial or economic methodologies create a false sense of authority and legitimacy which supports an instrumentalist view of cultural value (2005, p. 172). Cultural and creative enterprise does not work by rigid, singular and structured practices. Nor does it bear the weight of obligation for repeatability and predictability expected of economic rationalist modelling. However, the need to involve audiences in planning and evaluation has long been recognised and accepted by academics such as Carol Scott as critical for the survival of the sector:

> Engaging the public in decision-making to decide what services are needed and what benefits those services should provide opens the path to a better understanding of established preferences and the capacity to predict emerging attitudes and expectations ... failures to create public value in the past by both the authorizing and operational environments have been due to the under-representation of the public in decision-making (2013, p. 8).

Like Scott, I have experience working with the public in cultural institutions. Given this experience as a practitioner and the weight of recommendations made throughout the literature, engaging with the public was the most logical and promising approach to understanding what they value in their experiences with the State Library. As will be presented in the following chapters, I developed not only an understanding of value in a cultural context, but more importantly, I was able to conclude what that value represents to the people who have always had the most to gain from the State Library of South Australia.

Part Two of this thesis presents the results of my three main lines of inquiry seeking to understand what the public value about their engagement with the State Library, thus illustrating the public value generated with and within cultural institutions. The data analysis is grounded by the following historical overview of the formation of the State Library. This short history of the State Library also contextualises the public's perceptions of value, illustrating the meaning behind their references to local and State heritage and community identity. The second section within Part Two presents the findings from the survey program and the development of major value categories as well as the value associations that emerged from the responses. The third section presents the summary of interviews conducted with members of the program, building on the survey questions to develop detailed narrative profiles of value that address the 'under-representation of the public' in current reporting and evaluation formats, presenting in their own words the value and meaning the State Library holds for them. These three strands of research triangulate an approach to identifying qualitative value in a rigorous way, effectively testing and confirming one against the other, to discern the public value of the State Library, and bring balance to the quantitative approaches that are currently engaged to judge its worth.

# PART TWO:


## EVIDENCE OF VALUE IN THE STATE LIBRARY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

# 4    HISTORIES ENTWINED: LIBRARIES, LITERACY AND A DISTINCTIVE STATE OF MIND

A narrative historical context serves more than one end within this thesis. The following overview represents the 'thick description' described by Patton as an essential part of qualitative analysis:

> Thick, rich description provides the foundation for qualitative analysis and reporting. Good description takes the reader into the setting being described … classic qualitative studies share the capacity to open up a world to the reader through rich, detailed, and concrete descriptions of people and places … in such a way that we can understand the phenomenon studied and draw our own interpretations about meaning and significance (2002, p. 438).

This historical narrative also provides the background for the public's responses that connect their experience to the heritage of the State Library site, as well as their perceptions of community identity that emerged from the data. The following chapter also demonstrates two of the key arguments of this thesis: that the success of cultural institutions is inseparable from the vagaries of their economic and political contexts – the success of one impacts the other; and fundamental to an understanding of culture's value is an understanding of the role played by time. This longitudinal value is critical when considering the value and approaches taken to the evaluation of collecting institutions like the State Library. This also highlight a key point of difference between institutions' ongoing public value, responsibilities and relationships, and those of more episodic cultural experiences offered by festival organisations.

As Caust suggests, 'South Australians like to assert that their state has had a different history than other states in Australia'. There is some truth to that claim:

> South Australia was the only state in Australia settled by free European settlers in the nineteenth century without the presence of convicts transported from Great Britain. But, whether this gives South Australia a higher moral ground two hundred years later, particularly in the context of European treatment of the Indigenous population already in situ in Australia at the time of European settlement, is a moot point. Nevertheless, given the planned nature of the state and its unique pattern of European settlement in the Australian context, it could be concluded that the particulars of South Australia's history may have had some impact on the cultural and artistic development of the state (2005, p. 21).

Alistair Black also suggests that to understand any library, it is critical to know its history:

> What public library history freely demonstrates is the possibility of a close interface between library and mainstream history. Because public libraries are the most 'social' of library institutions, the relevance of the cultural milieu in which they have been situated is striking (1997, p. 99).

The 'cultural milieu' that gave rise to the formation of the State Library and public libraries across Great Britain was influenced by the spread of literacy amongst the general population. No longer the purview of the elite, this new appetite for reading and discussion drove the establishment of public libraries, in the form of Mechanics Institutes, Mutual Improvement Societies, public reading rooms, subscription and circulating libraries. The values underpinning these movements - democracy, universal education and communities of knowledge exchange - were transferred to the new colony of South Australia. This thesis draws on surveys and interviews with the public to argue that traces of these ideals and values still inform the public experience of the State Library today, reflecting the community's relationships with government, knowledge acquisition and cultural exchange. The State Library can be seen as an agent facilitating social inclusion and identity. The popular nineteenth century appeal of libraries as social, educational and cultural sites, combined with high literacy levels of aspirational migrants, provided the rationale to establish a library in the colony of South Australia. This idealised institution was intended to be an instrumental mediator of British values. The establishment of such a facility and the early challenges it faced also explains the importance of reading to those who emigrated and those in charge of their governance.

The role and value of libraries for the communities they support mirror social, political and industrial changes effecting nations. I will present the State Library in this light: both subject to and reflective of the social, economic and political context.

## 4.1   The temper of the times

Kinraide presents an overview of the coalition of disruptive impacts transforming traditional ways of life in in the nineteenth century:

> The Industrial Revolution, the Enlightenment, the French Revolution, and an explosive birth rate had altered Britain's social, political, economic, intellectual, demographic, and geographic landscapes in ways that could not have been foreseen a century earlier (2006, p. 2).

Black describes how early public libraries provided reading materials and discussion fora to inform subscribers and members of the public concerned with these disruptive changes. In responding to these political and social shifts, he suggests that cultural institutions also played an instrumental role in social regulation, belying the common espousal of political neutrality:

> Public libraries have rarely been the socially uncontroversial institutions portrayed by the library community and others. From their inception in 1850 public libraries were presented

by librarians, reformers and benefactors as vehicles for social integration and harmonisation. Behind this façade of neutrality, however, the Victorian public library was value-laden and, far from acting as a passive provider of books and other reading materials, reflected (and contributed to) the tensions associated with nineteenth-century transformations (1997, p. 99).

Though perhaps lacking in formal educational opportunities, the working classes of nineteenth century Great Britain were far from illiterate and ill-informed. By the 1830s, literacy and the benefits of education had spread well beyond the wealthier classes of British society. Beddoe describes the British elite as being 'concerned about the moral fibre of society and the need for cultural pursuits' as a distraction from the pressures of newly urbanised lifestyles (2003, p. 123). According to Black, libraries adapted 'neatly with the ebb and flow of Victorian social crisis' and were promoted 'as a panacea for social instability' (1997, p. 99). Thompson describes how radical working-class protests, many revolving around the Chartist movement, eventually reformed political boundaries and later extended suffrage to the majority of the population (1971, p. 9). The early Labour Party leadership, who arose from these movements, were mostly autodidacts. According to Rose many had benefited from mutual improvement societies and access to shared reading materials (2001, p. 7). The Labour Party recognised the value of education to the working population, and insisted that education was a responsibility of government to support an informed democracy. Rose describes how the new party believed that 'no disenfranchised people could be emancipated unless they created an autonomous intellectual life':

> Working people would have to develop their own ways of framing the world, their own political goals, their own strategies for achieving those goals… The whole canon of world literature – not just literature with an explicit political message – could help them develop those powers of understanding… They knew that Homer would liberate the workers. If the classics offered artistic excellence, psychological insights, and penetrating philosophy to the governing classes – if, in fact, this kind of education equipped them to rule – then the politics of equality must begin by redistributing this knowledge to the governed classes. Anyone growing up in an industrialised or rural slum would be predisposed to take the existing social order for granted: the vision of a long-dead author could come as a salutary shock, creating new discontents and suggesting radical possibilities (2001, p. 7).

Rose found that most working readers learned the basics of literacy and numeracy to support their vocation as mechanics, farm labourers and weavers, 'legendary for their habit of reading at the loom' (2001, p. 17). Libraries developed symbiotically alongside rising literacy levels.

The rise of literature, literacy and libraries in the UK supports an understanding of the high level of importance the promise of a library was to those considering emigrating to South Australia. This understanding also informs an appreciation of the character of the colonists, the library's first public, as well as the role literature and reading played in their lives. Dolin (2006) and Butterss

(2015) trace the impact of literature and novel reading on the formation of early Adelaide's social and cultural identities, as well as fostering imaginary links back 'home'.

The most relevant texts informing this historical overview address key moments in South Australian colonial and Victorian periods and are Sunderland (1898), Pike (1957) as well as more recent work by Foster and Sendziuk (2012 and 2018). Histories of the State Library and the South Australian Institute Movement were compiled by Bridge (1986) and Talbot (1992), presenting the key moments of the ownership and struggles to establish libraries in South Australia, presenting a weight of quality scholarship chronicling events of both colonial and library history. Mindful of the contentions of modern historiography, as described by Collins and Sendziuk, this historical overview of the library is intended as 'one version of perhaps multiple historical understandings' (2018, p. 4). Once again, I focus on the public that provided the imperatives driving the early iterations of the State Library during the mid-nineteenth century. These needs are still resonant for the public today. Then as now, the general public were adapting to a raft of social, political and technological disruptions.

## 4.2    Colonisation

The origins of the State Library of South Australia run in parallel to the founding of the state. In August 1834, a group of communitarian entrepreneurs, religious idealists and Chartist radicals pushed through parliament a plan to establish a utopian society on the shores of South Eastern Australia. The Provisional Committee of the South Australian Association (SAA) applied to the British Government to be granted the authority, as stated in their prospectus reproduced in Pike, to achieve the following:

> To found a Colony, under Royal Charter, and without convict labour, at or near Spencer's Gulph [sic], on the South Coast of Australia, a tract of country far removed from the existing penal settlements. For raising funds wherewith to remove people to a distant place, as well as to establish and maintain social order in the colony, making provision for defence, for the security of persons and property, and for the education of the colonists, some authority is required (1968, p. 8).

Provision for educating the colonists was clearly not only a priority but a responsibility considered as valuable as defence and security. In return for regal permission, the SAA agreed to terms described by Booth as ensuring the new colony would come at no cost to the British government, which stood to benefit from the creation of new markets, access to valuable tracts of land, and the solution to 'the problem of rural unemployment' promised by migration (2003, p. 157). Llewellyn-Smith describes how this scheme of 'systematic colonisation' was dependent upon the sale of land

to investors which would render the colony 'self-supporting' (2012, p. 13). Reynolds describes the economic model for the scheme being dependent on profits from land sales which were thought to be sufficient to fund the passage of skilled migrants. They in turn would save and buy their own property, thus funding the transport of more migrants, increase the population and develop a sustainable economy (2012, p. 26). According to Goldsworthy, 'many wealthy Britons were induced to buy land in the new colony by assurances that investment in South Australia would be money for jam' (2011, p. 3).

The SAA sought government legislative authority to elevate their association into the status of a corporation, enabling them to act with authority and protect their assets and those of other citizens in the name of the Crown. This model mimicked the settlement of North America, the colonies England had lost in the War of Independence, and was a deliberate strategy promoted in the SAA prospectus.[24] The same documents also state the intention of the SAA to differentiate themselves from other antipodean colonial settlements. By refusing to admit convicts and initiating protective measures for the Indigenous inhabitants, the SAA hoped to avoid many of the disastrous frontier catastrophes experienced in the colonies of Sydney, Perth and Hobart. Sutherland describes how the South Australian venture was 'sneeringly referred to as a visionary project' designed 'on paper by a writer of facile pen but very little colonial experience' (1898, p. 29). Booth also concludes that the principal motivations for the British government in granting permission for the founding of the colony was to 'avoid the cost of establishment and ongoing maintenance':

> Little was done to amend the self-seeking plans put forward by the promoters. Nor was any provision made in the Act for the colony's defence. Perhaps the government considered that the mere existence of a concentrated settlement on the coast would be sufficient to deter any foreign incursions. Economic imperatives were principally behind the government's preparedness to allow the colony to proceed (2003, p. 164).

However doubtful its beginnings or the nature of the government's intent, the bill to establish a colony in southern Australia succeeded, according to Sutherland, in bringing together two opposing sides of politics. On the one side there was the old-world Lord Wellington, aligned with opponents of the Reform Act of 1832, harbouring 'a good deal of suspicion and distrust' for 'Utopian Republicans'. On the other side there were the philanthropic advocates of free

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[24] Prospectus of the South Australian Association. (n.d). Reduced facsimile of first page of an original printing, from the papers of George Fife Angus in the Archives Dept. (PRG174, records of the S.A. colonization Commission, p.5.), cited in Pike, D.H, (ed) Notes on the South Australian Association, 26 November 1833 – 6 April 1835, *South Australiana*, Vol VII, 1968, p.8.

settlement and mutual support, intent on pursuing what Sutherland describes as 'a deliberate experiment in colonisation', despite, the proposal being 'promoted mainly in the interests of the proposed colonists themselves and for the bettering of their condition (1898, p. 31).

Following the abolition of slavery in England in 1833, the humanitarian leadership of the emancipation movement turned their attention to the treatment of Indigenous populations throughout the Empire, according to Reynolds (2012, p. 27). The founders of South Australia likewise resolved to be more mindful of the needs and treatment of the Indigenous inhabitants. However, Reynolds describes how the SAA proposed establishing the colony on lands deliberately described as 'waste and unoccupied' and 'fit for colonisation'. This proposal intended to circumvent new policies regarding the recognition of Indigenous occupation of the land (2012, p 26). Reynolds also asserts that the South Australian colonists were very much aware of atrocities visited upon the indigenous populations of Tasmania and New South Wales (2012, p. 25). The Indigenous population of the new colony was to be protected by His Majesty's law with the appointment of a Protector. However, when it came to possession of land, Reynolds suggests that the colonists did not believe in following the letter of the law. Instead, early colonists were deliberately constructing arguments to circumvent policy changes intended to reintroduce recognition of Indigenous rights. Reynolds describes how one of the founding members of the SAA, Colonel Robert Torrens, a prominent economist and then commissioner of the SAA, argued that '… the unlocated tribes had not arrived at the stage of social improvement at which a propriety right to the soil exists' (2012, p. 26). Reynolds concludes that without formal acknowledgement of Indigenous legal or recognition of property rights, there was no perceived need for the colonists to purchase the land. The colonial venture was able to proceed (2012, p. 26). Hence, according to Reynold's description, the Kaurna people, the Indigenous population of the Adelaide Plains, did not formally cede their land to the colonists, as had occurred in New Zealand with the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840:

> South Australia was very pleased to see itself as a new start, with land sales, immigration of respectable people, education, religion, no convicts, indeed a paradise of dissent. It may just as appropriately be called a paradise of deception (2012, p. 30).

The banks of the river that came to bear the name of Colonel Torrens was chosen as the site of colonial settlement. The river is known as Karrawirraparri to the Kaurna people. Draper describes Karrawirraparri as 'a sacred river' believed to be a mirror of 'the night sky – which represents … the afterlife' (2015, p. 81). Draper describes the importance of the banks of the river as residential and ceremonial sites up to and during the time of colonial settlement:

> The open red gum (Eucalypt) forest and parklands which bordered the river were dotted with traditional camps of Kaurna people and frequent visitors from neighbouring regions (including the Adelaide Hills, Murray River and lower lakes and Coorong, and the mid north Flinders Ranges). These gatherings included many ceremonies and traditional dances, and continued for approximately twenty years into the colonial period (2015, p. 81).

The Kaurna inhabited the verdant lower south east regions of today's South Australia. Sendziuk and Foster estimated the Kaurna to have numbered approximately 15,000 at the time of European contact (2018, p. 2). Nettlebeck describes the gradual removal of Aboriginal groups from the urban site of Adelaide to the Western edge of the settlement, where:

> The government provided homes for Aboriginal settlement, and the 'Native School', where Aboriginal children were trained in English language, the Bible and the kind of practical skills that would make them useful servants to Europeans (2019, p. 125).

I've seen no evidence over the course of this research to suggest there was any provision to supply the Native School with books or to allow its students access to the colony's proposed library.

### 4.2.1  South Australian Literary and Scientific Association

Culture, and a library's role as its conduit, was accepted as a civilizing, regulatory social force during the planning of the South Australian colony. Pike described the SAA enterprise as a plan to transplant 'not of a seedling, but of the full grown tree of English society, root, trunk and branch' (1957, p. 495). Beddoe also supports the notion that education and literacy were 'seen as a means of self-improvement and even a way of creating a better society' (2003, p. 123). Therefore, the first iterations of the State Library was intended to fulfil a range of aspirational and instrumental goals: as an instrument of education, acculturation and social moderation for the proposed colonial society. However, it was to suffer from the scant consideration of the colony's leadership that would allow the majority of colonists to access the books collected on their behalf. Even less thought was given to what they would want to read.

Two weeks after the Royal Licence for the founding of the new British colony was granted, and more than two years before the first colonists would depart from England, Richard Davies Hanson delivered the inaugural address to the South Australian Literary and Scientific Association (SALSA). According to Langham, Hanson proclaimed that their consortium 'were engaged in a unique experiment; and that never before had such enlightened planning for the cultivation and diffusion of knowledge in a new country been developed' (1936, p. 8). Expectations of and for a library were high.

The South Australian Literary and Scientific Association (SALSA) was the scion of the South Australian Association and featured several members of the SAA Committee, notably its first Secretary, Rowland Hill, and influential colonist, Robert Gouger.[25] Bridge outlines how the SALSA assembled a collection of books and pamphlets to form the core of a library with a single object: 'the cultivation and diffusion of useful knowledge throughout the colony' (1986, p. 1). It is not a coincidence that this phrase was selected as the sole object of the SA Literary Association. This mission reflected the goals and title of a well-established community-based educational movement, of which, in the opinion of Kinraide:

> Would be only a slight exaggeration to say that the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge was the most prominent, visible, influential and controversial educational program in early nineteenth-century Britain (2006, p. 1).

The Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge (SDUK) was a by-product of the mutual improvement movement and aimed to support universal emancipation for working men through education. According to Rose, this movement could be described as an exercise in 'cooperative education' on a localised level for groups of interested men to meet and share their available resources:

> 'In its classic form, it consisted of half a dozen or a hundred men from both the working and lower-classes who met periodically, sometimes in their own homes, but commonly under the auspices of a church or chapel. Typically, one member would deliver a paper on any imaginable subject - politics, literature, religion, ethics, useful knowledge – and then the topic would be thrown open to general discussion. The aim was to develop the verbal and intellectual skills of people who had never been encouraged to speak or think.' (2001, p. 50)

The SDUK differed from both Mechanics Institutes and Mutual Improvement Societies in their audience; where the Institutes and mutual improvement groups focussed on reinforcing class structures and targeting niche audiences, the SDUK aimed more broadly: to provide all sectors of society with the tools (ie publications) to pursue their interest and education. Rose describes how members of the SDUK Committee would tour the country with their publisher Charles Knight to encourage small community groups to pool resources to share publications. Other committee members, acting in the spirit of philanthropy, bought texts and 'donated' them to institutes. Where groups who may not have had resources to pool, the SDUK members would leave texts at local inns. There were no official teachers, syllabus or hierarchy; those present, the pupils would

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[25] Bridge (1986, p 3) does not mention Hill in his descriptions of the key figures in the SALSA, although the well-known founding fathers of South Australia are listed, including Gouger, Gilles, Hanson, Hindmarsh and Morphett. Hill is likely to be amongst those referred to as 'three others who did not emigrate'.

cooperatively support each other, contributing what they could to share and exchange knowledge within their communities to expand and build on common understanding.

By including the phrase 'the diffusion of useful knowledge' in their foundational documents, the SALA committee aligned their ambitions with the goals of an organisation well-known amongst potential migrants to South Australia. Therefore, it should have been no surprise to find those migrants also expected a similarly egalitarian mode of access to publications and learning opportunities. Born out of the needs of the working classes for education and the philanthropic bent of political idealists, the SDUK and mutual improvement model of 'cooperative education' and shared resources would have held appeal for the SALA committee members. Such a distributed model allowed them to fulfil their promise to provide educational resources within the new colony, despite their lack of government financial support to do so.

Both the SALA and SDUK shared committee members and founders who promoted life-long learning and universal access to education, as well as family connections. The Hill family represent trans- and intergenerational connections between the formation of the South Australian colony and the foundation of the State Library of South Australia. Matthew Davenport Hill was one of the members of Parliament who, according to his daughters Rosamond and Florence, ushered the bill to establish South Australia into law, devoting 'himself to the drudgery of making it known, and rendering its provisions acceptable' (1878, p. 32). Horsburgh suggests Davenport Hill did so 'on behalf of his brother Rowland's interests', describing him as one of the founders of the SDUK in 1826, with Lord Brougham and publisher Charles Knight (1983, p. 2). The Misses Hill asserted that the SDUK was established to provide inexpensive and authoritative publications 'to promote a love of freedom, and of peace, by educating the people and elevating their tastes' (1878, p. 80).

Younger brother Roland Hill was Secretary of the South Australian Association and arranged what Talbot describes as a donation of 10 pounds worth of publications to the nascent colonial library (2008, p. 7). According to Moss, Hill later 'fathered postal reform and the creation of pre-paid mail', allowing for all classes to access affordable mail – including newspapers and magazines - fostering literacy and communication across the British Empire (1979, p. 586). Moss suggests that Hill's reformist zeal to improve the postal system began whilst 'still connected with the South Australian project', perhaps in consideration of maintaining family ties between the colonists and 'home'. Rowland Hill is remembered today for the development of the first postage stamp and the revolutionary Penny Postage system implemented in 1837, (1979, p. 589-90).

Gorham describes the Hill brothers as exemplars of Victorian reform that saw them transition from libertarian ideals to an 'acceptance of regulation' (1978, p. 129). The same may be said of many involved in the South Australian Colonial experiment, though it would be beyond the scope of this thesis to explore further. Together, Matthew Davenport Hill and Rowland Hill contributed to the formation of the colony of South Australia and revolutionised the education of the working public via the distribution of accessible reading material throughout the British Empire. However, it would be their nephew who ensured the establishment of the State Library of South Australia.

### 4.2.2   The seeds of an idea for a library

Bridge describes how Robert Gouger, the state's designated first Colonial Secretary, began a collection of books to form the basis of the proposed circulating library with a donation of books (1986, p. 4). Covering a range of non-fictional subjects, these texts included accounts of exploration and settlement in Western Australia, New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land, as well as further afield in India, New Zealand, Canada and Sierra Leone. Amongst the collection were a preponderance of texts examining the North American colonial experience – the memoirs and correspondence of Thomas Jefferson, *Comparisons Between England and North America*, *Manual for Emigrants to North America* and *A Moral and Political Sketch of North America* by Achille Murat. Today, these and other surviving texts from the South Australian Literary Association form The Gouger Collection and remain on display in the Mortlock Wing of the State Library of South Australia. The texts covering the North American experience demonstrate the SA Association's intention to follow the example of the American colonies, settled as a self-supporting, free settlement. This approach informed Wakefield's plan to obviate the worst perceived failures of other Australian colonies and is described by Atkinson as deliberate and well-managed 'systematic colonisation':

> The principles by which they worked had been thoroughly considered beforehand according to current ideas about the moral, social and economic character of society – society being understood in mechanical rather than organic terms (cited in Prest (ed.) 2001, p. 115).

Amongst the collection of books intended for the colonists was a donation of publications from the SDUK worth ten pounds, the selection of which was delegated to John Hindmarsh, the colony's first governor.[26] According to Talbot, this donation from the SDUK brought the total collection to

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[26] Talbot's 2008 list of the collection of the SALA notes that the SDUK 'gave £10 worth of their books, to be selected at pleasure. To date no details of the selection are available'. A search of the SDUK papers held at the National Archives in Kew uncovered correspondence to Thomas Oakes esq from Roland Hill at the SAA offices at Adelphi Terrace in London, headed 'Respecting Cap Hindmarsh etc'. The note reads 'the present is no doubt intended for the South Australian Literary and Scientific Society – the company is a trading association with which we have no (illegible). Do

'a little over 500 volumes, as well as some pamphlets, loose serials and maps' (2008, p. 278). In 1836, the collection was packed in two trunks and loaded aboard the *Tam O'Shanter*, bound for the Gulf of St Vincent. The arrival of the *Tam O'Shanter* at Port Adelaide did not bode well for the fortunes of its cargo. According to Bridge:

> No sooner did the Tam O'Shanter arrive at the port, than it sank at its moorings, and the box had to be fished up. Nobody had a key, so it remained unopened in Surflen's Store in Adelaide for two years (1982, p. 1).

The difference in the numbers accounted by Talbot (500) and Bridge (200) indicates that the second trunk full of books probably remained at the bottom of Port Adelaide, or its contents were so badly damaged as to be irreparable.

Bridge describes the aspirations of the SALSA as a responsibility to guide the labouring classes of the new colony and ensure they were not tempted by potentially dangerous political thought. Hanson promoted the idea that:

> The real interests of all classes are identical … But it is obvious, that among those who go out as labourers we must expect to have many who are deeply imbued with the doctrines now prevalent among the class to which they belong … it will therefore behove us to take care that an antidote is provided (1986, p. 6).

Instead workers were to be encouraged, with the aid of hard work, into the higher echelons of the new society.

Hanson's seemingly patronising assertion, that the colonists needed to regulate the workers' ideas and access to potentially inflammatory material, was a genuine concern: the colony had a little by way of military presence and limited capacity for law enforcement. The antidote to which Hanson alludes was one generally accepted in the UK as having assisted in the transition of the population to new urban areas. The antidote was still considered to be a library, although as Bridge points out:

> It was well and good to imagine a mighty library as an engine of education for the population … but the reality was that there were only two hundred oddly-assorted books and only forty of the 546 first settlers had been able to afford the big fee and pass the rules (of admission) (1986, p. 8).

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you allow (illegible) or the Captain any voice in the selection of the books?'. This indicates that Rowland Hill was considered an appropriate go-between to clarify the SDUK's query regarding who would make the selection of books for the colony. Unfortunately, many of the SDUK papers were destroyed in World War 2 so a final list may not be recovered. There are however several SDUK publications in the State Library Special Collections and confirming their connection to the original donation would require further investigation beyond the scope of this thesis.

Thus, from a modern cultural value perspective, it could be said that the earliest iteration of the State Library was formed as an instrumental mechanism for education, the pursuit of which would enable settlers a share in the wealth of knowledge and provide the adaptability and creativity to stimulate and sustain the economic prosperity of the colony. However, rather than developing the library as an instrument for public good, those colonists with the wealth and privilege entailed with land ownership, and a degree of imported cultural capital, instead established an exclusive gentlemen's club. Women were also not eligible to subscribe, forcing them to rely on the men in their families to make selections on their behalf. Membership was expensive and available through invitation only, and no working men were invited. This represented an additional form of social and cultural regulation, replicating and reinforcing the social divides many working settlers left Britain to escape.

### 4.2.3  'What good will books do our colony?': Early Adelaide and the birth of a literary identity.

In his early history of South Australia, Sutherland described how alluring the promise of South Australia was to potential migrants:

> This feeling still exerted its spell upon large numbers who believed that they only needed the fuller and freer life of Australia to enable them to find an outlet for the energies of themselves and families, and a real chance of bettering their positions (1898, p. 35).

Upon arrival in the new colony, many migrants realised that they had fallen for a Utopian dream and found their new reality was far more feudal. According to statistics provided by Haines, government-assisted emigrants from the UK, selected for their vocational capabilities, were both enterprising and literate, with four out of five being able to read and of those, more than half could both read and write (1994, p. 234). Those arriving in South Australia expected to be able to access a library of books to improve their chances of "bettering their positions".

In his account of the role of books in colonial Australia, Dolin provides an overview of the settlers' complex new reality in the colonies, a new and challenging way of life in which books played a galvanising role concerning the 'rightness' of emigration and the contribution they were making as citizens of the British Empire:

> Settlers cannot be viewed exclusively in the abstract, as imperial functionaries. The profound unsettlement of their everyday experience of colonial life needs also to be acknowledged … Settler readers were front-line agents, vehicles for the dissemination of ideas and values that normalised and neutralised their activities: the real-world activities of political domination, exploitation and cultural destruction. Proud of their Britishness, Australian settlers read books that organised and reinforced 'perceptions of Britain as a dominant world power' and

'contributed to the complex of attitudes that made imperialism seem part of the order of things' … But the colonial newcomers, as they set about creating another Britain from the social and institutional structures, technologies and skills, narratives and cognitive maps they carried over with them, also found themselves alienated from their homeland, and out of place in their new country. Distanced as they were from the centres of mid-Victorian colonial power – even ignored by them – reading itself became a kind of contact zone: part of the settlers' struggle to stay in touch with the centre, to imagine themselves in some merely outlying province, where news took a little longer to reach. What they read, however, only reinforced the unreality and unimportance of a place where print culture was received but almost never produced (2006, p. 276).

Removed from the familiarity of their surroundings and transplanted to the other side of the world, some migrants had brought collections of books with them. Others soon turned to the promise of a library to maintain their cultural identity and imaginary links with the people and culture they had left behind and fulfil their role as instruments of empire building. They were met, according to Dolin, with denial.

> Distanced as they were from the centres of mid-Victorian colonial power – even ignored by them – reading itself became a kind of contact zone: part of the settlers' struggle to stay in touch with the centre, to imagine themselves in some merely outlying province, where news took a little longer to reach. What they read, however, only reinforced the unreality and unimportance of a place where print culture was received but almost never produced (2006, p. 276).

Amongst his many responsibilities, the colony's first Governor, John Hindmarsh, was also delegated with the task of selecting the donated ten pounds worth of works from the catalogue of the SDUK. According to Australian historian Manning Clark, Hindmarsh was known widely as a 'wild ass of a man' (1973, p. 59). As Governor he was also the ex officio President and local representative of the SALSA. As such, he was expected to an active interest in the collection of books and the idea of establishing a library. Instead, Clark suggests he had little concern for the notions of mutual improvement or the benefits of imported culture in the new colony:

> Somewhat to the disappointment of those who thought of South Australia as a society for the improvement of mankind Hindmarsh took no steps on board to arrange for the education of children, and made it plain that he would not support a library in South Australia: 'What good will books do our colony?' he asked (1973, pp. 54-5).

The nascent State Library was over-burdened by assumptions concerning the instrumental capacity of the collection, expectations that were not supported by the financial or political means to deliver them. South Australia did not have a parliament or constitution enabling self-government until 1857, 15 years after the colonists arrived. Deprived of an effective champion and devoid of political support, there was no official representative to promote the vision and implement the measures required to provide access and care of the books. There was also no

workable management model nor any funding available base to make a library a reality. The collection of 'useful knowledge' compiled by the SAA appeared to be little more than unaccompanied baggage that was eventually claimed by the new colonial elite. Bridge writes that 'puffing in London about an ideal colony and library was one thing; establishing them on the shores of the Gulf of St Vincent was quite a different matter' (1986, p. 8). Between the sinking of the *Tam O'Shanter* and the belligerence of the colony's first governor, it could be argued that the SALSA did not survive the voyage from England. According to Pike, though, it had already been 'usurped … by a Conversazione Club which met on alternative Wednesdays in London to discuss Colonists' problems and to drink tea' (2008, p. 271). The original members charged with championing the concept of a library had also either lost interest or resigned their positions of influence. The working colonists, dislocated from their familiar environment, and deprived of their promised educational and cultural opportunities, had to live with their disappointment or turn to each other for literary or educational support. A free public library remained an intangible symbol of planning for culture and education in the new colony, devoid of the essential funding and support to make it a reality. Decades would pass before the goals of the SALSA were implemented in a public institution capable of delivering the instrumental benefits expected of the colonial administrators and the intrinsic values demanded by Adelaide's early reading public.

### 4.2.4   A Truly Public Library

Bridge (1986) provides a detailed overview of the several iterations of subscription and access models employed as the collection of books changed hands. *A Trunk Full of Books* was written while he was the Official Historian of the State Library of South Australia which allowed unrestricted access to the archival collections.[27]  This section owes a debt to Bridge. Drawing from Bridge and others, I present the following as an historic example of the interdependence of intrinsic, instrumental and institutional values that inform our current understanding of cultural value, demonstrating how public institutions cannot survive without a balance between the three.

With no form of local representative government or colonial funding available, the proposed public library was solely dependent on subscription fees. This replicated the user-pays model underpinning the Mechanics Institutes in the UK. Bridge describes how this model failed in the new colony during times of economic hardship, eventually forcing a reluctant alliance between the

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[27] Bridge's record of publications indicates a level of scholarship and authenticity which is supported by other historians such as Talbot, suggesting he is a reliable source.

separate committees: one representing workers requiring access to classes to improve themselves, and the other representing the new elite, those enjoying the station of landowners. Both parties were passionate about establishing the library, yet disagreed about the purpose – reading for enjoyment and reading for education - and who should pay.

By the early 1840s, when the economic fortunes of the colony were so dire as to call into question the venture's viability, subscriptions to the library dropped and the first subscription library folded. Bridge describes how the collection of books were deposited with a money lender to cover a debt of 20 pounds (1986, p. 13). By 1845, when wheat sales picked up and copper was discovered in the north east of the state, a private group of moneyed gentlemen retrieved the library books, with the intention of forming a private membership reading club. According to reports in the *South Australian* newspaper outlined by Bridge, this caused public outrage:

> Does it not occur to you or to the gentlemen who have the management of the institution …
> that there may be many to whom it would be most desirable to throw open the doors of the
> Subscription Library – who may not have, or who cannot afford the means? [original italics]
> Is it not notorious that the class who would derive most advantage from access to the
> Library, and from whose lucubrations [night study] [original interjection] there the colony
> also would probably derive benefit, are not ordinarily much burdened with superfluous cash.
> To make not provision … is … very illiberal and exhibits the Muses in a very unsocial light
> (1986, p. 14).

As funding models changed and the private reading club also fell into dire financial straits, Bridge describes how it came to depend on a merging of interest groups, the sharing of resources and access to government funds for education (1986, p. 15). Along with the public moneys, the coalition of administrators were required to accept the responsibility of providing education to the public. Bridge suggests that the workers were more interested in access to classes and the social aspects of the institute, proposing that 'perhaps a few needed to learn to read first' before they could appreciate the collection of books (1986, p. 15).

Bridge paints a detailed picture, drawn from press reports, of a gathering in October 1847 to celebrate the opening of the combined Adelaide Institute and Subscription Library, then housed in rented rooms on Hindley Street:

> Smillie gave a 'lengthy pointed, and eloquent address upon the advantages of education' to
> the 250 Adelaideans assembled, mostly 'of the softer sex'. The walls were covered with
> pictures, including 'an engraving of the Duke of Wellington, taken from daguerreotype
> likeness'. Dr Kent's electro-magnetic battery, Mr Berry's model steam engine, and a
> seraphine, or reed instrument, made by a young man called Adamson, by trade a
> wheelwright, together with some geological specimens, were much admired. Mr Witton
> played music and refreshments were had for a shilling. All agreed it was a 'very brilliant

affair', so much so that on the night Mr Stephens of the Bank promised to donate a piece of land to build an institution and six gentlemen between them promised forty-five pounds to start a building fund … Unfortunately, nothing came of it in bricks and mortar (1986, p. 15).

This description shows that colonial Adelaideans were avid consumers of culture, but not necessarily as eager (or able) to provide the necessary financial support. The appetite was there, but not the means. The event also indicates the multi-faceted role the Institute would eventually play, as the colony's first library, museum and art gallery. The combination of the two library models – subscription and public funding - was intended to bring together social classes, disciplinary interests and safeguard the collection. Bridge, however, describes that within a year, the struggles of the Institute reflected broader societal and cultural clashes:

> The mechanics and the gentlemen were not getting on with each other. Lectures were interrupted by 'ill-bred' persons 'stamping' and 'hissing' as in 'pot-houses' the Register complained; on the other hand, 'Quill' wrote to the paper that the Institute had been swamped by 'clergy, landowners and employers' and this new 'aristocratic tone' was discouraging to the 'people' (1986, p. 16).

The fate of the fledgling institution mirrored the standards and structures, behaviours and fears of the new and experimental society developing around it, and has been its destiny ever since. What was required to establish an accessible and sustainable public library was an independent and active arbiter, to balance the interests of the moneyed subscribers with the educational needs and aspirations of the public. They also required the financial clout to ride out the colony's economic ebbs and flows. This was to be the role of democratic government, once the colony actually had one.

### 4.2.5   Learning from history

There were several factors involved in the establishment of what could be called the first public library in South Australia. Some of these remain relevant to how the public value the State Library today.

The first is the arrival in the colony in 1850 of John Howard Clark, the nephew of Rowland Hill and Matthew Davenport Hill. The son of their sister Caroline Clark, John Howard Clark bore his uncles' beliefs in the power of education and the value of inexpensive access to reading and learning materials. Clark, whom Bridge characterises as carrying the family trait of 'self-improvement through education', became a successful businessman and vocal advocate for a free public library (1986, p. 25). Clark was a fascinating polymath and according to Bridge became known as 'the

most proficient accountant in the colony' (1986, p. 25). Clark remained associated with the library and learning sector of South Australia until his death in 1878.

The second factor contributing to the advent of the first public library was the establishment of a democratically representative government in South Australia in 1857.  According to Sendziuk and Foster, this was followed by 'political instability' that would remain a 'feature' for the remainder of the century (2018, p. 55). However, a local government, even a mildly dysfunctional one, could still be effective. Bridge describes how Clark along with fellow library advocates, Benjamin Babbage and Charles Mann, lobbied elected members of parliament that the government of South Australia assume 'a permanent responsibility to provide a library for the public' (1986, p. 30). This responsibility was enshrined in the form of the first Libraries Act of 1856. This Act enabled the building of the South Australian Institute on the corner of North Terrace and Kintore Avenue. As will be addressed in the following chapter, this building still stands today, symbolising for many members of the public the ideals that informed South Australia's progressive political legacy and community identity.

The third factor contributing to the establishment of the library, and what could be seen as a key component of the State Library's institutional value, was the colonists and their relationship with both government and reading. Bridge describes a series of heated arguments between those advocating for the value of reading for pleasure, the importance of reading for the edification of the self and improvement of society, and who would be paying for it (1986, p. 20). These conflicts can be viewed as a colonial example of the current dichotomy being played out between intrinsic and instrumental values, obviated by the institutional role played by the nascent government. The shifting balance between these three factors reflected the power struggles that arose from the colony's economic circumstances, the commercial priorities of its early ruling classes and the ongoing human imperative of the colonists to access books for both their reading pleasure and edification. Until there was a representative government for the public in South Australia, there was no balance between the instrumental and intrinsic concerns of the public, no independent body to speak for all citizens. The long-term commitment to the library in the form of the first act of 1856 enabled a sense of confidence, continuity and access, agreed behaviours and clear responsibilities. The act legitimised the endeavour, fulfilling the institutional role to ensure the library's continuity of purpose, providing a site and a service which belonged to all citizens, even though it took some time before all were permitted access and subscriptions were not required. This commitment allowed for the inclusive process described by Dolin as 'the invisible work of

culture formation' particular to South Australia to begin (2006, p. 283). The public can thereby be seen as having shaped the State Library and, by extension, the culture of South Australia as much as the State Library shaped its public.

The concept of public value and South Australia's cultural policy environments have changed since the nineteenth century, but the State Library remains in public hands. The State Library today is a statutory authority governed by the Libraries Act 1982 and within the terms of an agreement between local and state governments. Unlike most other Australian State Libraries, the State Library of South Australia remains part of the Public Library Services, a legacy of its origins in the Institute network, as presented by Talbot (1992) and Ing (2010). The current corporate structure sees the Director of the State Library reporting to both the Department of Premier and Cabinet as well as the Libraries Board of South Australia.[28] This structure balances the responsibilities of maintaining South Australia's reference collection with the trusted role of mentoring and supporting a broader state network of lending libraries. It could be argued that this structure meets the various public needs for library services in South Australia, articulated from the time of the institution's inception, creating a balance between the intrinsic, instrumental and institutional value offered by the various services. However, this theoretical approach does not provide an accurate view of what the public value, what that value looks like, nor how it is represented to government or the board.

I have presented the policy and economic environment in which the State Library currently operates and the impact of the Creative Industries paradigm of federal policy preferences in preceding chapters. I have also noted the gap in the knowledge identified in the literature regarding the need to engage the public in order to identify public value in a cultural context. What remains to be addressed is the results of my research: how the State Library is valued today by the members of the public in their own terms, why they value it and how that value is manifested. For some, the value of the State Library is ingrained within their identity. The following chapter presents how key the issues that drove the foundation of the library - namely democratic access to literature or knowledge, who funds them and why - are still prominent in today's library experience for many members of the public. These historical connections will be shown to inform today's library users' sense of what it means to be South Australian.

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[28] See State Library of South Australia, Organisational Structure and Executive Leadership, viewed 9 October 2019, https://www.slsa.sa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-09/state-library-sa-organisational-chart_1.pdf

# 5   SURVEY PROGRAM

As addressed in the Methodology, this research project presented a challenge: how to gather and organise the audience perceptions of value to best reflect their meaning, in such a way that does not follow prescriptive or linguistically etic approaches, subject to the mediation effects of digital tools, or perpetuate the use of managerial terminologies derived from the commercial marketing sector. Patton describes qualitative inquiry as 'the only real way of understanding how people perceive, understand, and interpret the world' and this supports the more ethnographic approach to gathering and analysing data for this thesis. Focussing on the subjective meaning and value of the public experience is intended to illustrate what Patton describes as Symbolic Interaction:

> A perspective that places great emphasis on the importance of meaning and interpretation as essential human processes … People create shared meaning through their interactions, and these meanings become their reality (2002, p. 112).

My approach to evidence gathering for this case study was designed to identify and capture emic articulations of value in the natural language of the State Library public: how they perceive the value and meaning of their experiences and how these perceptions impact on their reality. I consulted with members of staff at the State Library, drawing on some of the interview subjects' extensive experience and knowledge of public engagement and library services. Much of this approach is informed by their collective expertise and generous insights, as well as their unmistakable dedication to public service.

The bespoke framework of thematic organisational categories described in the methodology were adapted for the library context, grounding the data analysis within hermeneutic phenomenological research, described by Kafle as:

> A discipline that 'aims to focus on people's perceptions of the world in which they live in and what it means to them; a focus on people's lived experience'. […] a qualitative method focuses on human experience as a topic in its own right. It concerns [sic] with meaning and the way in which meaning arises in experience (2011, p. 182).

This research program did not set out to measure or search for any predetermined values or key performance indicators that could be adapted for a marketing strategy or audience development opportunity. Rather it was designed to explore what the library experience means to the public who engage with it, in order to understand their relationship with the institution. Adopting this ethnographic stance changed the research perspective: I went into the field to look for what I could find, not to find something I was looking for. The following chapters present the core

findings of my primary research. The first section examines the public responses to the survey, using neo-institutional categories of value to organize and present how the public values the State Library. This also includes the emergent value associations describing how that cultural value is apparent or, as Walmsley suggests, "manifested" (2016). The second section presents interviews with the public as narrative profiles of value, exploring the subjective library experience and what they mean to each subject over their lifetimes.

## 5.1 How is the State Library's cultural value made manifest?

As presented in Chapter 3, the data collection for this case study is based on the scholarship and recommendations of arts audience evaluation commentators, namely Brown & Novak (2007), White & Hede (2008), Radbourne, Glow & Johanson (2009, 2010), Scott (2013), Kaszynska (2015) and Walmsley (2013, 2016). These theorists suggest that the audiences and publics of cultural institutions have much to have much to contribute in the determination and assessment of cultural value. Therefore, I focussed on the public perspective to address the research questions and identify how the public values the State Library.

Ben Walmsley shifted the cultural value discussion from an epistemological to a phenomenological approach, engaging directly with audiences with his examination of the immersive 'deep hanging out' approach (2016). As mentioned in section 3.6.3, Walmsley concluded that 'the underlying question is no longer, it seems 'what is the value of culture?' but rather 'how is cultural value manifested?' (2016, p. 13).

This section presents the findings of my survey analysis, first against each question in narrative form based on the major theme, then followed by the value associations. Where possible, their meanings are described by quoting the respondents' natural language. (Please note that not all of the 84 respondents answered all the questions, hence the variation in the numbers of responses to each question). To overcome the propensity of other techniques to fragment and decontextualize data, this approach draws on recommendations made by Punch. He suggests that 'there is a storied character to much qualitative data, and thinking about stories in the data can enable us to think creatively about collecting and interpreting data' (2014, p. 187). Weaving together stories from the survey responses in this way developed into a narrative of value representing the collective answer to each question, preserving the emic phraseology of participants and syntactical context of each responses. This approach obviates any translation or modification of the respondents' intent or meaning. Grouping similar responses against the

emergent value associations or manifestations not only illustrates a network of common responses amongst survey respondents, but points to possible answers to the key questions guiding this research: how does the public value the State Library and how may such value be communicated in order to provide meaningful narrative context to mandatory reporting requirements.

### 5.1.1   Question 1 - Why do you visit the State Library of South Australia?

This question was designed as a non-threatening introduction to the survey and addresses the public's motivation for engaging with the State Library. The open and non-judgmental nature of this question invited respondents to nominate their own reasons rather than pre-empting or presuming their responses with a set of possible motivations. Many of their responses were brief and ranged from the highly specific and purposeful to more contemplative and serendipitous. The result was that almost all respondents nominated their motivation (82 out of the total 84 respondents), providing an overview of why the public engage with the State Library and what they expect from the experience. When aligned with similar responses under subthemes, 176 articulations of value were identified.
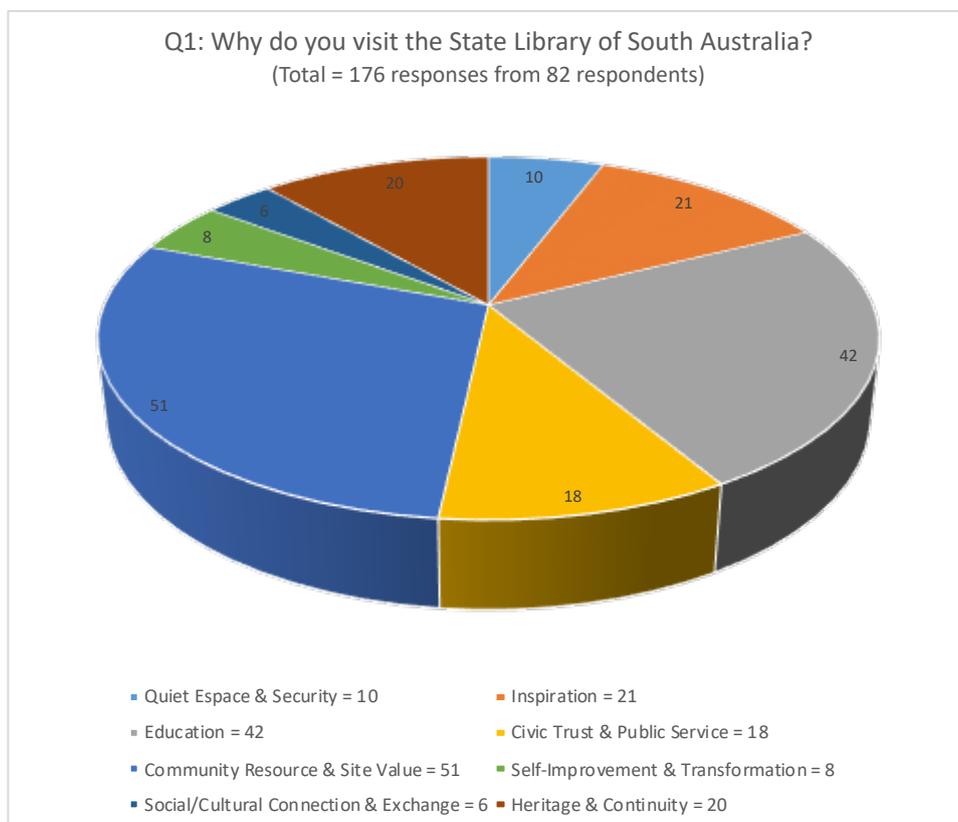


**Figure 2: Question 1, Major themes for public articulations of value.**

The highest proportion of responses (51) related to the major theme of Community Resource & Site Value. This theme reflects how respondents were motivated by the perceived or expected benefits to be gained through their engagement with the shared resources, such as the collections, staff and reference books, as well as the anticipated benefits derived from their physical or digital connection with the site. The public were motivated to visit the State Library for the environment and facilities ('To recharge my phone', 'Quiet place to study', 'Business meeting in café', 'Research that I cannot do from home') as well as to access the collections ('Special collections', 'Exhibitions', 'The Story Wall', 'to read about the early civilisations'). A number of respondents visited the State Library for public events (7) and to attend the 'Seminars and talks', 'Friends' presentations'), while two others had brought visitors to share the site as a place of cultural interest. These responses indicate that the public derive value from a diverse range of services and facilities provided by the State Library which are dependent on resources shared by the community and require being physically on site.

The second most common motivation for visiting the State Library concerned Education (42). This included both formal study related to tertiary or school education ('looking for references', 'Assignments', 'Project discussion' and 'group study') as well as more informal study purposes which provided no indication of links to being a student enrolled in a program ('For research', 'Reading', 'to find medical texts'). There were six respondents who visited to gain 'access to books'.

Inspiration (21) was the third most common motivation and reflects more intimate, relational and intrinsic engagements with the institution. These responses convey a sense of familiarity with the institution, indicating previous experiences, a level of prior knowledge and of expectation. This is reflected in value articulations such as 'It's a beautiful place – and it's a nice quiet working environment', 'I am a volunteer', 'I love it' and 'To explore possibilities'. There were eight respondents who were in the State Library to pursue personal projects, namely family history research, as well as one member of the public who was there 'To write a novel'.

At this early stage of the analysis, it was apparent that a significant number of respondents to this question (20) were motivated by a sense of history or appreciation of the heritage of the site. In line with the principles of inductive analysis outlined by Clarke and Braun (2017, p. 298) addressed in the methodology chapter, these responses were grouped together and assigned a new category of value for the State Library: Heritage & Continuity. This category of value includes 10 motivations

relating to general 'Ancestry research', 'family history' and the public event series Genealogical Gems. In what was to become a recurring theme across the data, three respondents mentioned the historic architectural character of the building with two respondents visiting specifically to 'show visitors the Mortlock Wing'. The co-creative nature of the relationship between the State its public is evident in one respondents' motivation, who had visited 'to correct a photo identification at the library'. The historical collections had also drawn in three respondents intending to conduct an 'archival search', access 'in depth local history' and more specifically 'to explore possibilities of finding out more about Mortimer Nolan and the Jesuit missionaries in South Australia'. Another respondent had visited the State Library because they 'like the photo exhibits of old South Australia'.

The category of Civic Trust & Public Service reflects the relationship between the public and the members of staff. This is based on the egalitarian service provision expected of the State Library, as well the level of faith and trust the public shows in return for those services. Eighteen respondents expressed how they valued this relationship. This value was articulated in terms that indicate an appreciation for the accessibility to the facilities and authenticity of the knowledge they are able to draw upon via interactions with the trusted staff. Public events drew five survey respondents to the State Library, including both 'Tangent' and the 'Hairy MacLary Family Fun Day', the latter of which was aimed at families with children. Free access was nominated by four respondents motivated to visit because 'the internet is good and free' while two others were drawn to the 'free English classes'. One respondent was motivated by a sense of civic engagement, stating 'I am a volunteer who transcribes'. This again points to the collaborative and co-creative nature of the library experience: many give of their time and expertise to the care of the collections in return for the benefits they receive. The authenticity and integrity of the institution is indicated by three respondents who were seeking 'information on different subjects', 'advice' and who visited in order 'to keep up to date'.

Of the remaining three major themes, 10 articulations of value were categorised under Quiet Escape & Security (such as 'I needed an open meeting place free from excessive disruption or noise' and 'Beautiful place – a nice quiet place to study'); eight respondents nominated motivations related to Self-Improvement & Transformation ('to prepare for IELTS exam', 'For job hunting' and to 'refresh') while six respondents visited the State Library in pursuit of Social / Cultural Connection & Exchange through the free language classes ('I went to attending [sic] at one-to-one and free conversation class') and to participate in interactive events, such as 'Edward

Abbott's "The English and Australian Cookbook" dinner … and discussion' or a lecture from Australian social researcher and writer, Hugh Mackay.

Figure 2 (below) represents the distribution of public articulations of value against the subthemes, illustrating the type of value respondents associate with visiting the State Library and what perceived or expected value motivates them to visit.
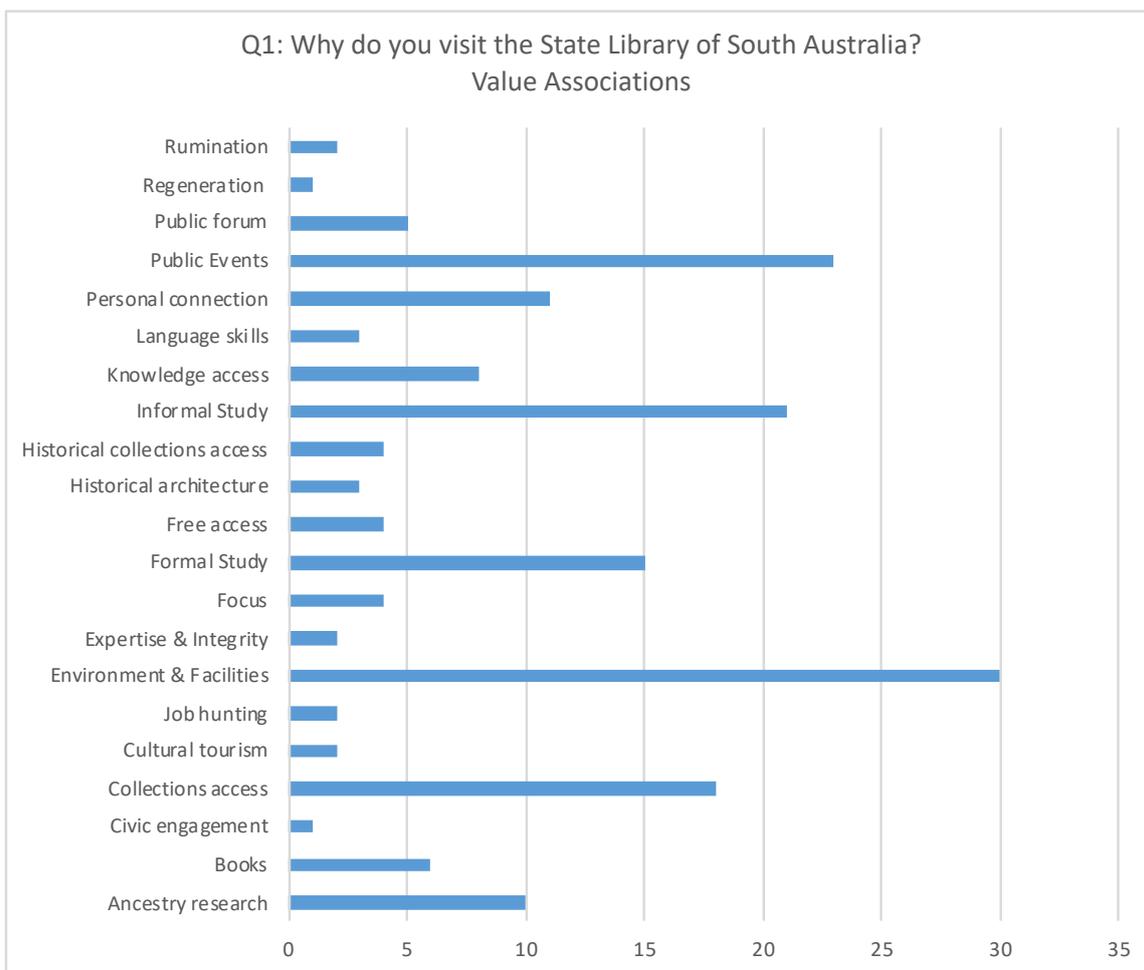


**Figure 3: Q1, Number of responses aligned against value associations (how is that value manifest?).**

The data indicates that the most common value association motivating the public to visit the State Library was related to the environment and facilities, the public events and shared resources available for study and research. Their research was supported by access to the archival and reference collections, the availability of free WIFI and computers as well as the conducive environment created by the historic architecture, the trusted expertise of staff and the integrity of the information they planned to access. Others visited for more personal or intangible reasons, through a personal connection, familiarity with or emotional attachment to the site, or for more civic and institutional purposes, such as volunteering. Collectively, these value associations reflect

the major theme of Community Resource and Site value, providing a description of what that value means to the public and why it is the main motivation that draws them to the State Library.

### 5.1.2 Question 2 - What benefits do you think the State Library creates for you and/or the Adelaide community?

This question was designed to capture perceptions of value enjoyed by individual respondents as well as what they considered may be of value and benefit to others. My intention with this question was to gain insight into what the public consider to be the public value offered by the State Library and was based on Scott's description of public value as 'outcomes which add benefit to the public sphere' (2013, p. 2). This question elicited a broad range of responses that demonstrate a depth of reflection, empathy for others and understanding of the operations of the State Library.
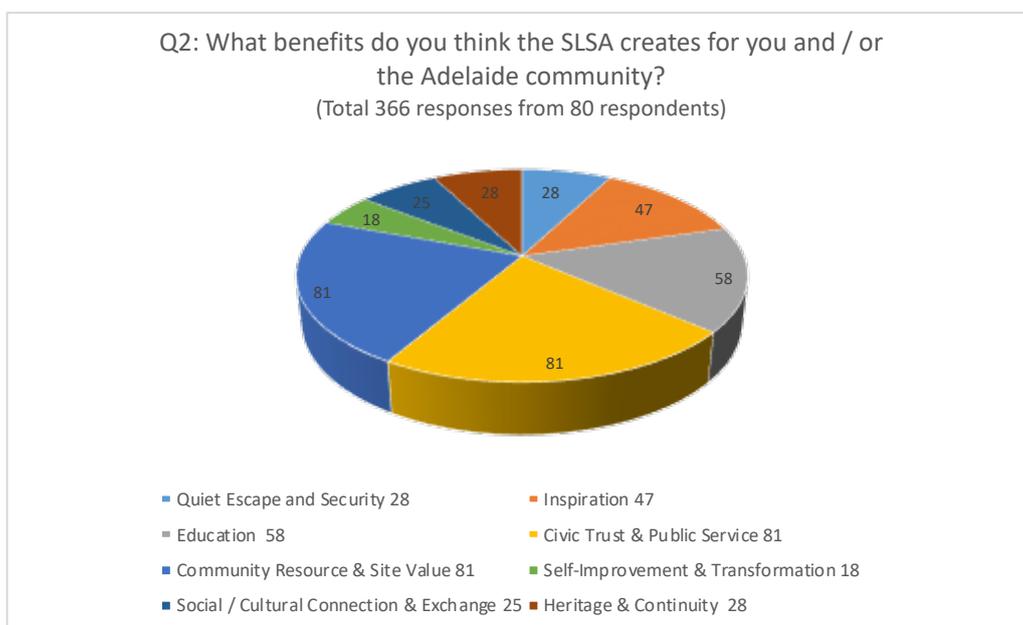


**Figure 4: Question 2, Major themes for public articulations of value.**

From the 80 respondents to this question, 366 value associations were recognized, with an almost equal number (81) categorized against the major themes of both Community Resource & Site Value and Civic Trust & Public Service.

As occurred in response to Question 1, most respondents to Question 2 perceived value in connection with the shared resources and opportunities available within the physical site. They described the State Library as a 'repository' providing 'community access for the story of our state's people and institutions' which offers 'a space to explore every kind of information...to study to relax to be entertained'. The value of the collections ranked highly, with many perceiving

benefits in the 'wealth of information and access to old publications and books that cannot be accessed anywhere else'. Some suggested that 'The SLSA is more than just a collection of material or the gateway to online information. It holds the collective memory of the people of South Australia'. Others perceived value in benefits beyond the immediate individual experience: 'For me, the resources of the library are an important social and cultural resource'. Another indicated a connection with institutional value, perceiving the State library as a 'hub for encouraging people to value the resources and facilities provided by the state government'. The State Library facilities are highly prized for their affordances, such as 'Quiet relaxed atmosphere to study, meet, discuss things' as well as for 'coffee' and the 'kindly staff'. Respondents recognized value in the free access and collective activities afforded by the State Library as a 'politically-neutral space for attending various functions, like art exhibitions, which I regularly attend'. Some respondents answered with a degree of passion for both the library and its community, seeing the library as 'a shared community experience' that is 'absolutely a necessary part of a civilized society and must be upheld and adequately funded and staffed'. These latter responses offer insight into the direct connection between the respondents' State Library experience, and their relationship with government – as the custodian, funding source and provider of library services for the community.

In Question 1, 18 responses were categorized under the major theme of Civic Trust & Public Service. However, for this second question, 81 responses indicated that this major theme was of equal importance when considering the benefits generated and available to others as the site itself. The responses contain a range of symbolic and political references, indicating a strong relational connection to the policy environment. The State Library is considered 'One of the landmarks of this State that embodies our collective identity and underpins our history' which 'helps me learn about our state heritage and our city'. Respondents perceive transgenerational benefits deriving from the State Library's role as a 'Great archival depository' providing 'access to historical documents', as a 'holding place of SA publications' and 'archive of cultural history' 'for generations to enjoy'. Respondents recognized the role played by staff in creating value for the public, describing them as 'friendly', 'kind', and 'helpful'. Respondents appreciate the 'searchable physical publications and documents not always available online', providing access to 'a wealth of information' creating 'deep understanding in almost all subjects'. The benefits associated with the role the State Library plays in bringing people together were acknowledged in such value articulations as 'Libraries play a vital role in healthy interactive communities', that the institution 'makes us feel good about living here and having access to the State Library', and is 'great way of

getting out, doing something new & for us heading into the city'. One respondent expressed routine trust in the State Library built up over time, describing it as 'my first port of call to locate all kinds of information', indicating a history of satisfaction in service delivery and reliability. Another also suggested the State Library is a source of 'information that is true (i.e. not fake) and which can be and often is contextualised by professional librarians. The significant reference to the librarians indicates the active role these team members play as mediators and cocreators of the experience for a public seeking information they can trust. Trust in the organisation is also shown by the number of respondents (5) who suggested they value the State Library because they found it 'a safe space for everyone', 'a safe and secure environment' in which to 'communicate with our friends and study'. These results demonstrate how the State Library provides services and features for the public beyond its official role as an information service provider, offering a place of security for vulnerable or insecure members of the public. This may refer to the presence of security guards, a familiarity with the processes and knowledge of acceptable behavior acquired over past experiences, or possibly gained from being in the company of other like-minded members of the public. The State Library is also valued for the freedom it provides which 'allows people to engage in their niche interests and hobbies' by providing 'endless resources and possibilities for learning as an adult'. The State Library provides members of the public with the 'opportunity to learn about the past but also keep abreast of new interests' which 'promotes inquiry & shared story telling', human characteristics which, as described earlier, ensured the survival and success of our species and echoes the original institutional mission: the cultivation and diffusion of knowledge.

The dominant value associations for this question indicate that the public place a high level of value on the site, the team members and collections. One of the most interesting results was the high value placed on the symbolic associations of the retentions and protentions[29] (18) afforded by the State Library and what the institution represents in terms of legacy and stewardship (35) of the collections. The State Library offers 'a richer frame of reference, widening one's horizon about how we make sense of the world', is considered a 'resource for historical and cultural heritage', and 'holds the collective memory of the people of South Australia'. Freedom of Thought (25) and the Expertise and Integrity (24), most often associated with the librarians, also indicate a strong

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[29] This value association is derived from the work of Georgina Born, as explained in the Introduction. She describes 'retentions – memories or traces of the past – and protentions – projections or anticipations. Hence, the past is always experienced through retentions of previous events, just as the future is experienced through protentions of possibilities' (2015, p. 368).

appreciation for the ongoing care of the collections by generations of librarians, inspiring a high level of trust and respect. Other respondents appreciate that 'there is no limitation to use library', 'the internet is efficient and unmoderated', suggesting that the open web access available at the State Library may have value for members of the community for whom such civil liberties may be exceptional. Respondents are aware of the multi-facetted nature of the institution's operations and why it 'collects, preserves, interprets our culture', perceiving benefits associated with providing 'permanent housing of important information for the public'.
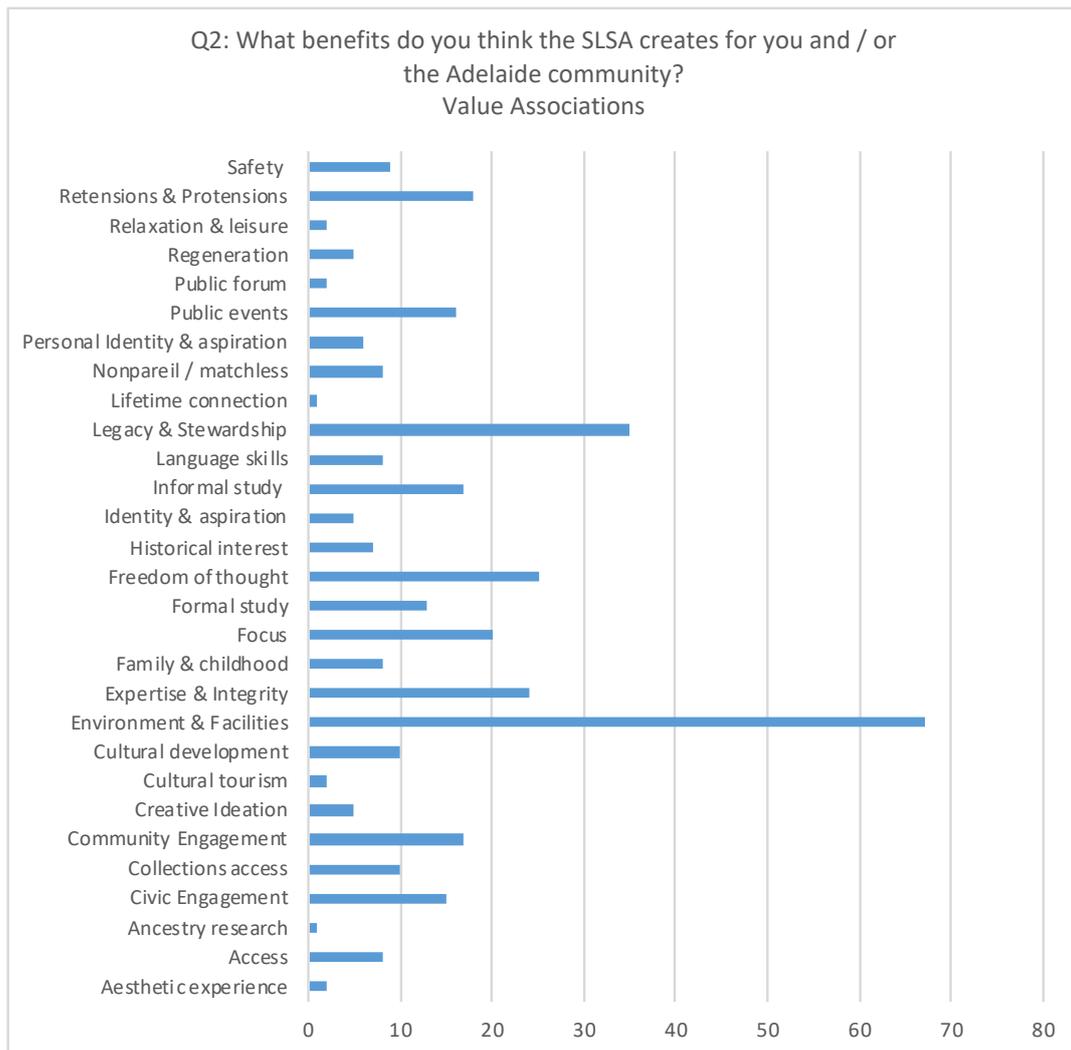


**Figure 5: Question 2, Number of responses aligned against value associations (how is that value manifest?).**

The two value themes dominating responses to this question – Community Resource & Site Value and Civic Trust & Public Service - indicate how the public perceive the institutional values of the library, as described by Holden, which 'are created in the way that [the] organisation relates to the public' (2006, p. 18). As these perceived benefits are articulated by the public experiencing the institution, these results also address what Walmsley described as a gap in knowledge concerning

how the public engage with culture, or in this case with the State Library, 'as a vehicle to engage with each other and with the world, and to discover their role and identity within it' (2016, p. 287). The public do not experience the State Library as an episodic or hedonic entertainment. Rather, these responses suggest that the institution is a part of their life, informing how they perceive their place in the world, and they appear to believe others feel the same.

### 5.1.3 Question 3 - What is your earliest memory of attending any library?

There is a significant body of international research outlining the influence of early childhood exposure to arts and culture, and adult engagement with the sector (See Elsley and McMellen, 2010; Mansour et al 2016; Oskala & Keaney et al, 2009; Scherger & Savage, 2010). Rather than exploring the socio-economic impacts on cultural transmission, which is beyond the scope of this analysis, the public responses to this question illustrate the connection between positive early childhood experiences with libraries and the value they now associate with the State Library as adults. All but three of the respondents offered their earliest memory of a library experience. These often detailed memories varied in scale and format, from 'receiving our excitedly anticipated carton of books every month from the Country Lending service of the Library', 'the school library which seemed so huge and exciting' through to sensory imprints, such as 'the smell of books, the wonder of taking one home and the amount that were available'.
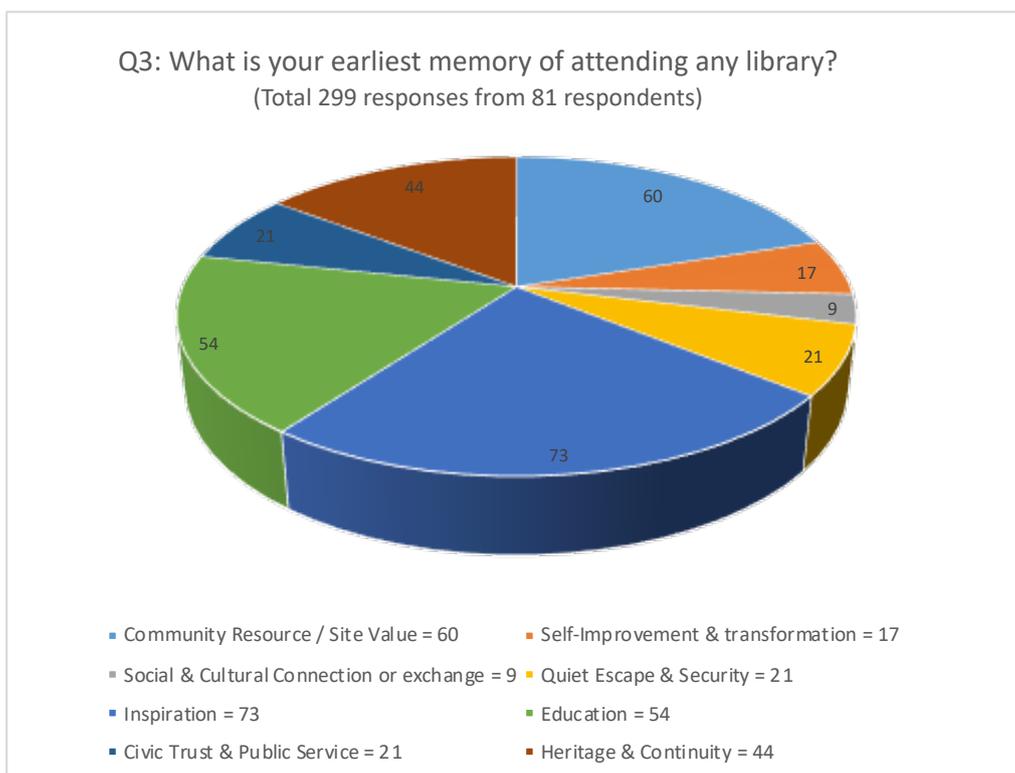


**Figure 6: Question 3, Major themes for public articulations of value.**

The public memories provide insight into how positive early experiences informed respondents' ongoing relationships with libraries in general. Respondents most frequently recalled their sense of wonder on visiting their first library, making Inspiration (73) the dominant major theme for this question.

There is a clear link between when these adults first learnt to read and their earliest memory of a library. Some learned to read at the library 'as a child attending reading group'. One respondent recalled they first visited a library when 'four years old - I've held a library card or reader ticket for 50 years'. Another asserted that in '1954 I discovered books. Have been a fan ever since'. Others recalled specific times and locations, such as 'Glenelg library when I was 8 yrs [sic]. I went every week for many, many years. I still go there' and 'going to the Burnside library to borrow from the children's collection and getting the books stamped'. The State Library and the Adelaide Children's Library feature in several responses, such as the 'children's library in the city when I was a schoolboy', 'Mother enrolled me at the Adelaide Children's Library just around the corner on Kintore Ave' and 'going to the old Circulating Library which used to be in the Institute Building'. Some recalled a sense of purpose and maturity informing their memories, recalling 'as a child growing up in Melbourne, going to my local library in Camberwell to look up all the books on dinosaurs' and 'when I was about 5 and went to our local library in the city of St Albans, UK and chose books independently. It seemed to me to be a treasure trove'. Respondents remember library services as a means of overcoming physical or social isolation, such as 'being 'a lonely teenager in a strange town starting work. The local library gave me refuge and worthwhile activity'. The presence of librarians and other staff was recognised in references to 'speaking with friendly teachers and staff'. The life-long impact of early library exposure is demonstrated by a respondent who recalled borrowing 'a book called *Libby, Oscar and Me*. I loved the book and didn't want to give it back. My son is now called Oscar'. Others recalled a sense of belonging and welcome which inspired regular return visits. 'As a kid in the 1970s in the fantastic children's library. We came most Saturdays for storytelling and reading, borrowing too. All the way through high school too, borrowing fantastic cassettes. What an amazing collection of interesting music!'. Many recalled being involved in events or activities, accompanying 'my parents and my cousins who were older to participate in various events' or were inspired by 'hearing Hilda Baillie reading Winnie the Pooh at the Tumby Bay Area School library'. Some combined a trip to the library into a family routine, whereby they 'used to go every Friday night. After the library we would get an ice cream or a donut. It is still one of my fondest childhood memories'. Another recalled 'walking from home to library (1960s) with my library bag on a Saturday… with my big brothers. Selecting books on my own (all grown up) and then walking home'. The transnationality of the library experience is also evident in mentions of libraries from around the world, such as 'my primary school in Colorado. Loved libraries', 'I went to the state library of China', the 'local village library in S. India'.

One respondent did not have prior library experience before they attended university, while two others suggested their first library experience was in 'the Mortlock'.

The diversity of these childhood experiences with libraries demonstrates the importance of a positive early experience with any library is in forming connections with other libraries later in life, and will be explored further in the following section (5.3), in relation to the experiences of my interview subjects.

The second most common major theme for this question was Community Resource and Site Value (60), where respondents recalled site specific elements, such as 'reading in the big chair in the children's library' or 'the reading area all the books, floor mat and cushions'. The physical possession and access to books was prominent amongst the responses, where respondents recalled 'Seeing so many books that I hadn't read yet', 'a lot of books'. Respondents provided strong recollections of mobile library services, such as 'receiving library books from the city (Adelaide) while living in the country', the 'country lending service, … about 65 years ago' and 'the box of books that came from the NSW Education Department library in Sydney. It travelled on the train once a month 400 miles to our little one teacher public school. It brought the rest of the world and its wonder and joys to a small village that was only offering an unstimulating and deprived environment'.
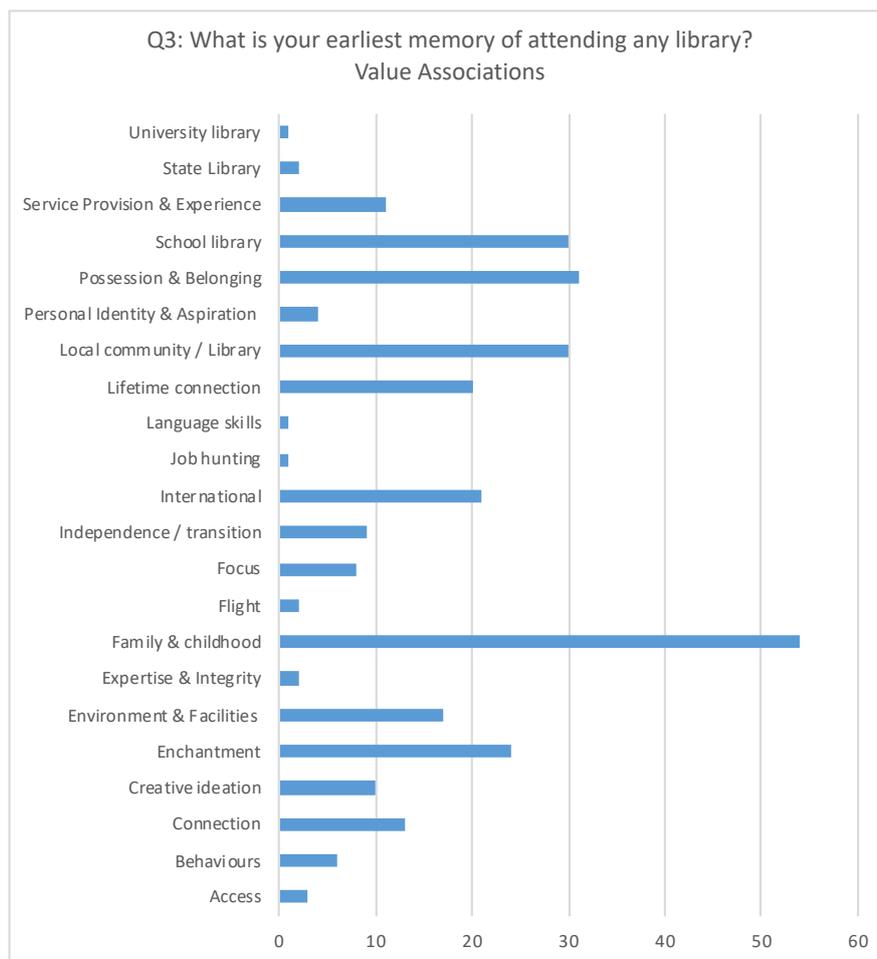
**Figure 7: Question 3, Number of responses aligned against value associations (how is that value manifest?).**

This question concerning first memories of libraries elicited personal and long-held responses, illuminating the values the respondents associate with the State Library, what they have grown to expect in a library experience, and how their early library experiences are frequently entwined with some of their earliest memories. There were 299 value associations identified from the responses to this question. These reflected the connection between the wonder and joys of finding a welcoming space for children and facilities opening a world of 'enchantment' (24), encouraging them to engage and develop their reading skills in connection to school (30) or their local library (30). This data suggests that respondents' early library experiences informed aspects of their personal identity (possession & belonging, 31). Visits to the library were a part of family activities (54) as well as provided opportunities to develop personal agency (independence and transition, 9) through being free to explore, select and borrow books. These were significant milestones and memories that have remained throughout their lives throughout their lives (20), as evident through their recollections of titles, covers, stimulation and smells. The clarity and vivid nature of this data suggests that positive value associations made in childhood may be recalled

and reactivated by each visit respondents make to the State Library, linking the public to library experiences which are both temporally and geographically ambiguous. Engaging children with books in libraries and providing a positive experience is more than entertainment and literacy development. Azar Nafisi discusses the role of reading in a manner reflective of these responses, arguing that:

> Stories are not mere flights of fantasy or instruments of political power and control. They link us to our past, provide us with critical insight into the present and enable us to envision our lives not just as they are but as they should be or might become. Imaginative knowledge is not something you have today and discard tomorrow. It is a way of perceiving the world and relating to it. Primo Levi once said, "I write in order to rejoin the community of mankind." Reading is a private act, but it joins us across continents and time (2014, p. 3).

Respondents may have had their first library experience in regional New South Wales, China, England or the nearby suburb of Glenelg, accompanying their siblings on a weekend outing, hoarding borrowed dinosaur books or reading the fictional tales of *Libby, Oscar and Me*. As intrinsically important as these experiences were, by signing up for a library card, respondents joined an international community which fosters knowledge. Respondents recall this positive experience and impact on their imagination each time they visit a library for research, inspiration or understanding. Every visit reinforces their memory, reconfirms their understanding of the world and their places within them.

### 5.1.4  Question 4 - What is your earliest (or best) memory of attending this library?

Respondents were generous with their recollections of the State Library of South Australia. Almost twice as many value articulations than the previous question was identified (558), from almost all of the survey respondents (80). This question was designed to determine what may distinguish the State Library from other library experiences, to understand where its greatest appeal may lie and therefore, what symbolic, tangible or service-oriented benefits or experiences underpin the relationship between the public and the institution. What emerges from the minds of the respondents is a picture of the State Library as a dominant cultural force: a heritage site that plays an active role in the public perception of Adelaide's community identity; and a transgenerational connection with past and future generations.
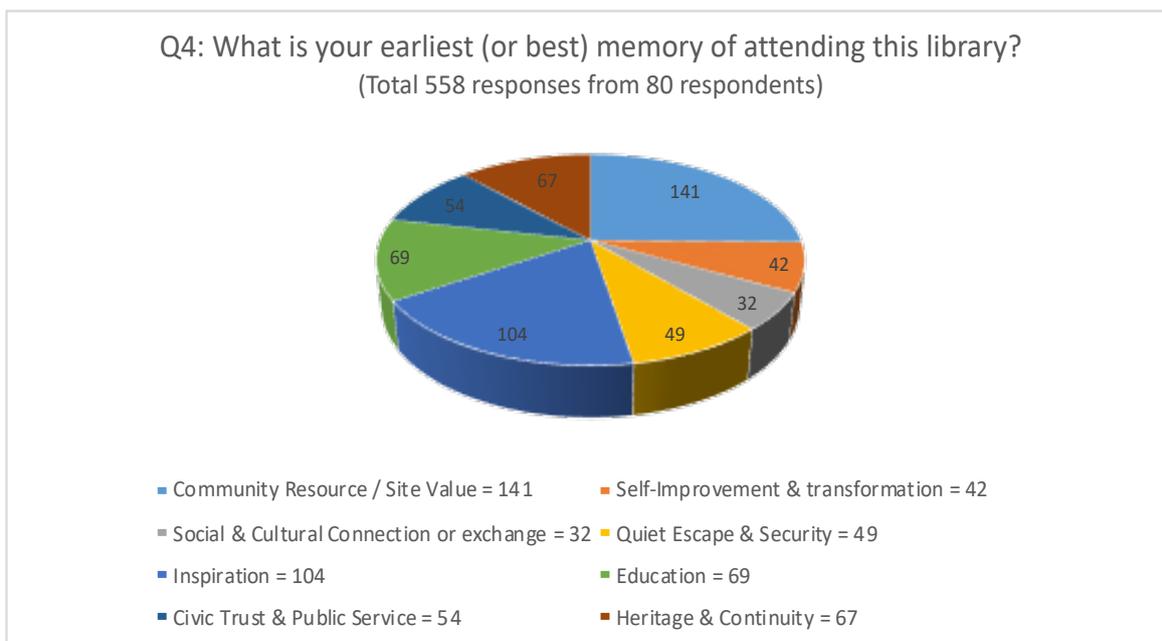
**Figure 8: Question 4, Major themes for public articulations of value.**

The physical location of the State Library on North Terrace dominates respondents' earliest or best recollections, with 141 value articulations aligning with the major theme Community Resource & Site Value. The Mortlock Wing played a significant formative role in many of those first impressions, be they associated with the collections, events or solitary studying.[30] Respondents 'visited and fell in love with the Mortlock Wing' and impressed by aesthetics of the building, recalled 'seeing the Mortlock Wing' and 'being just so impressed with the wonderfully unique Mortlock library'. The best memory of several respondents was simply 'studying in the Mortlock Wing' or 'when I knew I can study at Wing – Mortlock [sic]', suggesting that they value the space not only for its beauty but also its functional affordances. One respondent recounted their best memory 'was a surprise wedding in the Mortlock'. Another recalled how 'we tried to get into the State library, but because we didn't want to give up our bags, we came to the Mortlock Wing instead. The second we entered it was amazing - the old books, the wood, the lighting...'. Other elements of the site, both old and new, also resonate with respondents, even though they are no longer operational. This was especially true of the Adelaide Children's Library, which was not

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[30] Completed in 1884, the Mortlock Wing is a three-levelled polychromatic stone and brick Romanesque building, housing significant historical collections of South Australiana. According to the State Library website (http://guides.slsa.sa.gov.au/c.php?g=410288&p=2795746) the building was originally intended to be one wing of a mixed collections quadrangle facing North Terrace intended to house the National Gallery, Public Library and Museum of South Australia. Although economic circumstances prevented the completion of the all three wings, the building opened with all three institutions in residence in June 1884, 11 years after construction began and 23 years after the need for more space at the Institute Building had become apparent (Bridge, 1986). Original chairs and other features are still in use today and, as shown in the survey and interview data, is one of Adelaide's leading tourist attractions.

technically a subsidiary of the State Library. The Adelaide Lending Library was the parent organisation of the Children's Library and also no longer occupies the site. However, respondents' childhood associations with the physical space informs their memories and perceptions of the State Library today – they perceive no distinction between the two organisations. For example, 'we used to visit the State Library when it was still a borrowing library with the children's section downstairs' and 'came most Saturdays for storytelling and reading, borrowing too…', 'a whole library geared to my age-group and interests - treasure trove!', 'borrowing the kids' books' and 'magical old books with nondescript covers'. These responses indicate the extent to which memories of a well-curated library space set up specifically for children informs the experience of those children when they become adults, demonstrating how important access to a children's library is to the development of future audiences. They also demonstrate that members of the public are somewhat ambivalent about the libraries' management or administrative structures. They care primarily for the presence of a library within that site and those buildings. Their relationship is with the location, which acts as a point of continuity from their earlier experience to the present day.

Other respondents recalled being part of a shared or community experience, such as 'studying in the Hub as people played the piano', 'a wonderful tour and orientation given by Stamos, showcasing the resources available', or 'bringing a group of about 20 pensioners who had never been in their lives and seeing their surprise at the range of exhibits and displays of information on offer because they had expected only books'. As in the previous questions, family members are mentioned by respondents. These illustrative recollections offer glimpses of family life and precious childhood moments, of when they 'tagged along with Mum (she had some stuff to do)', or 'spending the day with my Mum at this library', or 'went with my Dad, held his hand. Was in a grown-up world of wonder. Felt safe. Just wanted to stay (about aged 7 I think)'. Others associate their best memory with finding their family within the collections, describing 'coming to do family history research as a young adult', how it was 'so exciting to find a special reference. Perhaps a newspaper photograph of my Dad', and the exhilaration of 'a eureka moment finding my great-grandparents' records'.

The State Library also appears as a resource and site of transition for new arrivals to Adelaide. Respondents who 'became a borrower when I first came to Adelaide more than 40 years ago', had 'just moved to Adelaide to live here' and 'it helped me assimilate into the South Australian culture and history'. For some, the State Library provides a pathway through the liminality of relocation,

towards feeling comfortable or even at home. The State Library becomes part of a routine in a new environment for those who 'came here and I like this place. Then, I start to visit this library every day'. The English language classes feature in several recollections. One respondent described attending a 'one-to-one conversation session, and the teacher help me to correcting my resume, this was priceless help for me'.
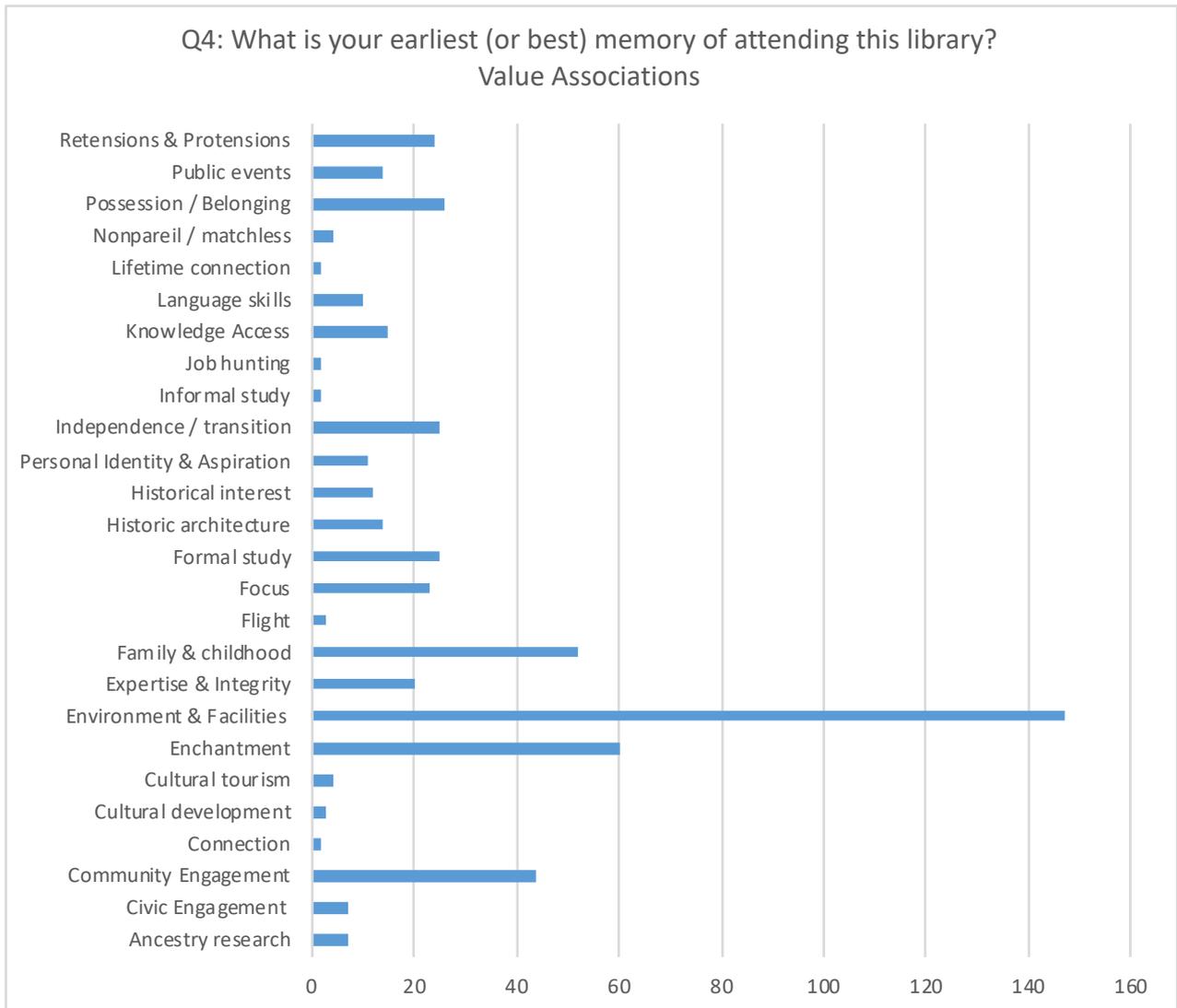


**Figure 9: Question 4, Number of responses aligned against value associations (how is that value manifest?).**

This data indicates that the public place a high value on not just the buildings, events, books and services associated with the environment and facilities (140), but include references to what the State Library enabled them to do – the impact it made on their life at different stages in their lives. This suggests a curious mix of intrinsic and instrumental forms of value, underpinned by the institutional value generated by service provision, trust and stewardship. These memories and their corresponding value associations (retentions and protentions – 24), span generations of families and connect respondents to the State Library over different periods in its development as

a physical location and public institution. The data suggests that the public and the library have co-evolved, changing preferences and styles but retaining a connection to the longitudinal value; a constant and, in some instances, deeply personal set of value associations (family and childhood – 52). The second most dominant value association reflects the sense of enchantment (60) experienced during their first encounter with the State Library. This suggests that the association does not deteriorate with age, but remains clear in respondents' memories, sustained by maintaining a connection with the State Library over their lifetime, with the result that 'every time I go it's the "best time"'.

### 5.1.5  Question 5 - What does the State Library mean to you now?

The previous questions established what forms of value the public have come to associate with the State Library, as well as the previous experiences which inform their perceptions and articulations of value. Question 5 was designed to gain insight into what that value means or represents to the public in symbolic and intrinsic terms, rather than instrumental or purpose driven associations. The highest number of value articulations were identified from responses to this question (518), with the majority aligned once again with the major theme of Inspiration (87). This was followed by a relatively even concentration of responses aligned with Heritage & Continuity (80), Community Resource / Site Value (77), Social / Cultural Connection & Exchange (75), Education (70) and Civic Trust & Public Service (also 70). This data indicates a strong network of values, generated by the mixed uses afforded by the spaces, the sites and collections, as well the temporal ambiguity of the experience: respondents perceive value in the library well beyond their own current time and purposes.

Q5: What does the SLSA mean to you now?
(Total 518 responses from 74 respondents)

- Community Resource / Site Value = 77
- Self-Improvement & Transformation = 39
- Social / Cultural Connection & Exchange = 75
- Quiet Escape & Security = 19
- Inspiration = 86
- Education = 70
- Civic Trust & Public Service = 71
- Heritage & Continuity = 81
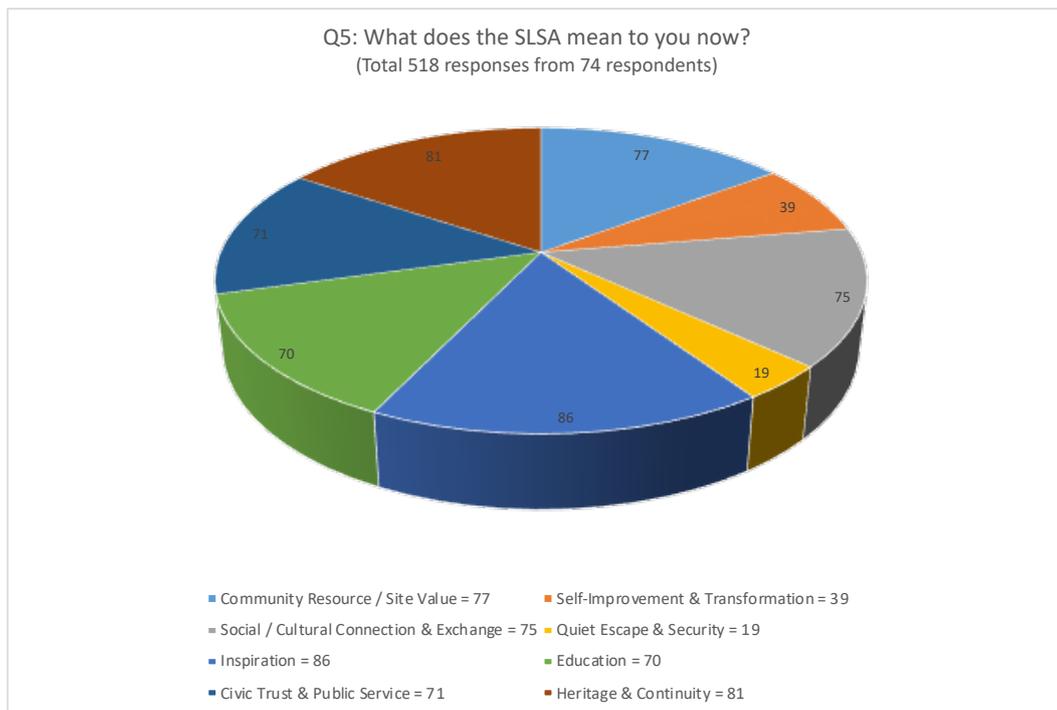
**Figure 10: Question 5, Major themes for public articulations of value.**

The public place great symbolic value on the buildings and the environment created for the public, stating that 'it's a very important institution that signifies the essential goodness in society, upholding and defending the right to learn, and the value of knowledge being freely accessible, as a cornerstone of a progressive society'. Several respondents indicated that the State Library was 'unique', an 'irreplaceable institution, so valuable a resource for so many reasons'. The buildings and services represent 'an important, valued, deeply entrenched part of the psyche of our community and an integral, significant part of our city', suggesting the public consider the State Library as connected to Adelaide's civic identity. Several consider the State Library as 'an iconic landmark, an essential and vital service for our state', a 'symbolic hub of culture and civilization' and 'the repository of everything meaningful'. However, one respondent felt it no longer lived up to their memories and was 'a sad shadow of its former self. It seems to be the worst of all state libraries in the country, moving backwards, uninspired and uninspiring. I would very much like it to return to its former glory - active, fun, exciting, experimental', where they may once again consider it to be a 'resource and also a source of pride'. Some valued the egalitarian access to the services and resources of value, indicating an appreciation of benefits beyond their own, suggesting that the State Library is 'a space for all, provides service for everyone [sic]', noting that it is 'a champion institution of free, dependable information and digital sustainability' as well as remaining 'somewhere I can find the most obscure books I need!'. The attraction and benefits of

the physical site is demonstrated by one respondent who 'live[s] in the country and it is a 3-hour drive to get there, but we are so fortunate to have such a wonderful asset'.

The responses aligned against the theme of Inspiration reflect the public's personal aspirations and the formative role the State Library plays in their individual identity (52), such as those claiming that 'it means many things to me', how it represents a '2nd house', 'a place to feel free in' and an 'honest friend'. The aspirational connotations associated with possession and belonging (44) are reflected by respondents who consider the institution to be 'a place where I can be a better me', 'I just love it', that it is 'one of good places where I have good quality experiences' and remains 'a place where I want to go'. One respondent suggested that 'my transcribing work there keeps me alive! I'll be 91 in three weeks', whereas another considers that 'it's a place to meet with others and have a study group, or simply study by myself'. Others were inspired by being able to pursue knowledge or information for personal projects or niche interests (26), suggesting they place a high value on access to specific facilities (110), 'especially the jewel of the Mortlock library, I've attended talks there but have also spent many hours in the Somerville Reading Room going through old TV Week magazines to find particular articles'.
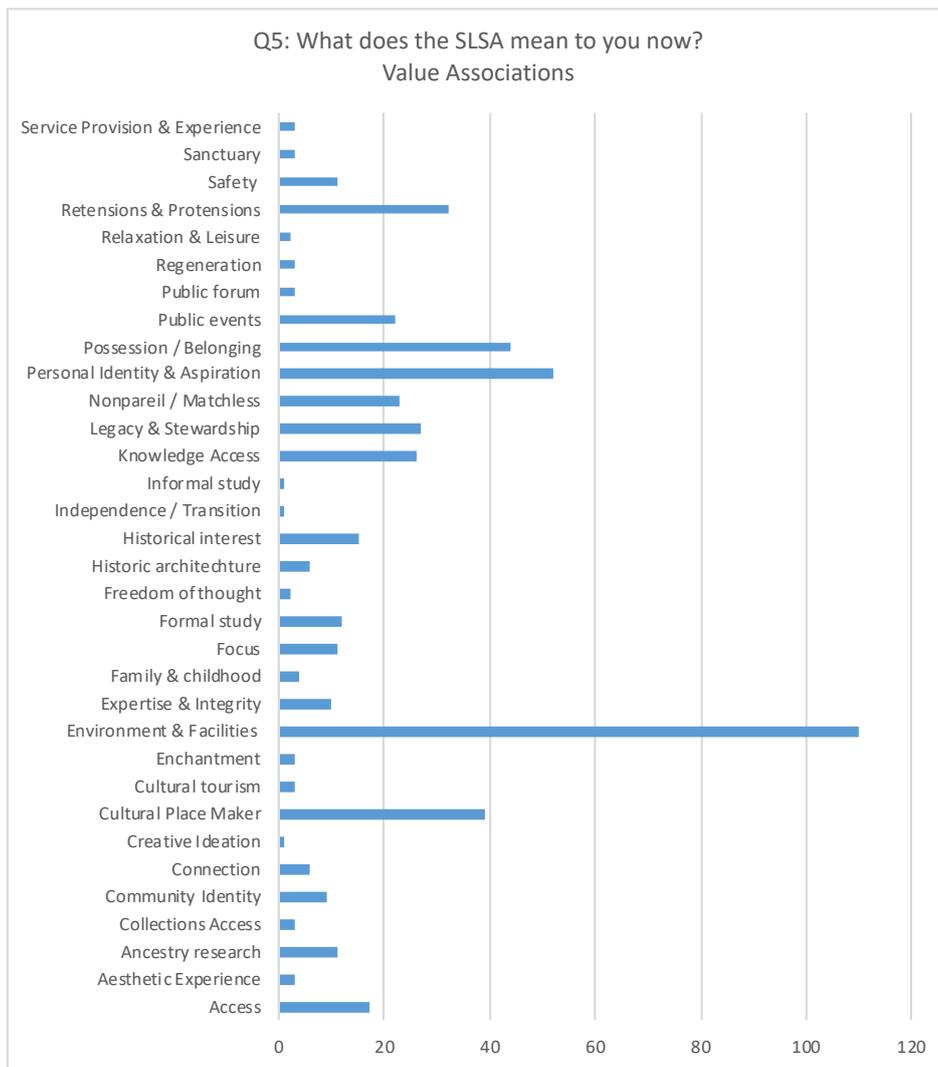
**Figure 11: Question 5, Number of responses aligned against value associations (how is that value manifest?).**

The responses aligned with the emergent theme of Heritage & Continuity indicate strong value associations with the history of the buildings and collection as a cultural place maker (39), but also how their relationship with the State Library informs their image of the State of South Australia. These responses confirm the significance of this emergent theme.

The State Library is considered 'a State treasure', 'a treasure trove - please keep it free and accessible!', 'I would be very upset not to have this wonderful place to go to'. Respondents appreciate the State Library's 'unique role in being the custodian for all printed word in our state', providing 'access to South Australiana, family history', and ensuring the 'preservation of historical documents, out print books and archival material', 'and access to old publications and books'. Respondents suggest that the archival collections are valued highly, but that their potential is also recognised, the latent value awaiting activation by themselves or others. The State Library is considered to be 'a link to our past and our future', symbolising 'history, continuity' and that it is

'good to know that it is here'. 'The State Library of South Australia is an iconic landmark, an essential and vital service for our state' and continues to 'provide valuable support and collaborative partnership with Public Libraries in SA to provide our communities with the best library service possible'. The rich complexity of these articulations is best reflected in two simple responses fulfilling the promise made at the State Library's inception in August 1834: 'it is part of who we are!', it 'gives answer to my thirst for knowledge'. The civic retentions and protentions (32) demonstrate how the public believe the State Library engenders both personal and collective identity, impacting on perceptions of who respondents are now and who they want to be in the future. This aspirational value association connects individuals to the community, family members and events through history and into the future, suggesting their hopes and expectations for the preservation of not only the collections, but the value and benefits they experience for others.

### 5.1.6 Question 6 - How does the State Library support, service or contribute to your main purpose for visiting today?

This question returns the respondents' focus back from the symbolic to the practical. I designed this question to identify the points of engagement with staff or the resources where value is perceived, and, how through their interactions, that value is activated. The responses reflect basic pragmatics of service provision– from noting the use of the furniture and web access to the accessibility of collections. However, the data also illustrates how respondents recognise the expertise and integrity of librarians and other members of staff. These responses confirm team members' role in cultural value activation, detailing how they inform and influence the quality of the public experience. As confirmed by earlier responses relating to earliest library experiences, these are formative interactions which determine the likelihood of the public associating value with the library experience, and their propensity to return.

Q6: How does the SLSA support, service or contribute to your main purpose for visiting today?
(Total 354 responses from 75 respondents)

- Community Resource / Site Value = 103
- Self-Improvement & transformation = 25
- Social & Cultural Connection / Exchange 25
- Quiet Escape & Security = 19
- Inspiration = 41
- Education = 36
- Civic Trust & Public Service = 78
- Heritage & Continuity = 27
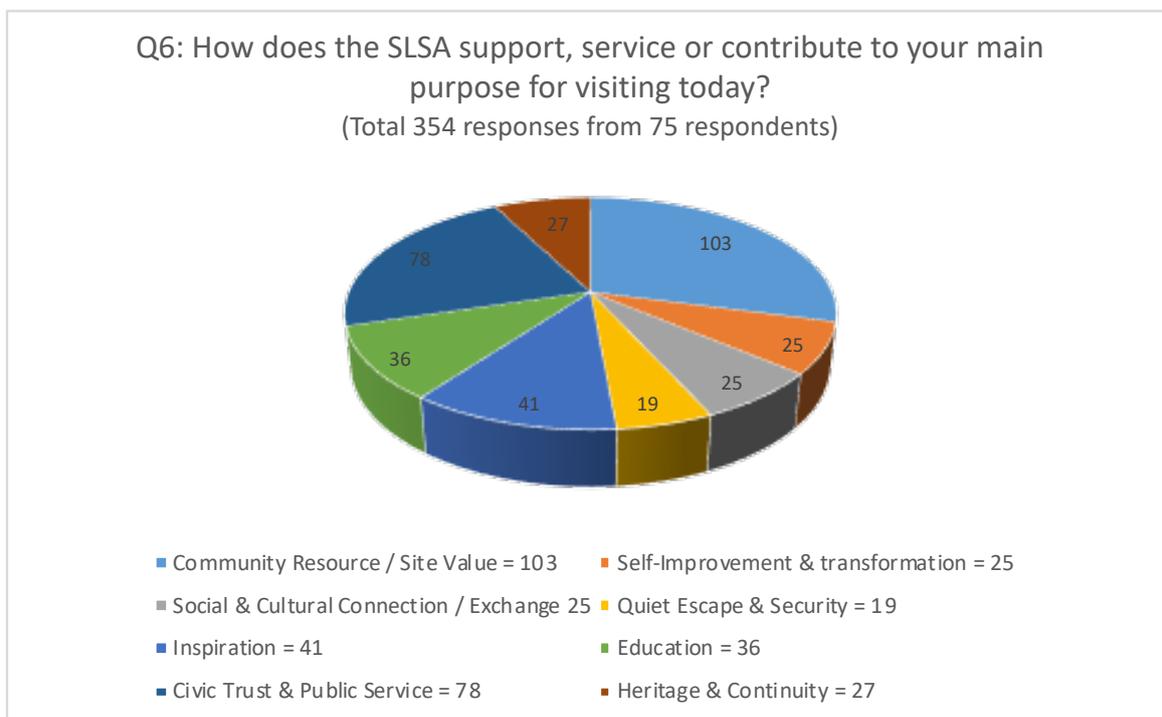
**Figure 12: Question 6, Major themes for public articulations of value.**

The Community Resource / Site Value again dominates responses (103), underpinning all other forms of value associated with the public experience. The tangible support provided by the State Library is made manifest by 'providing a free public space to sit indoors' which is a 'great flexible space and facilities', an 'open space for study' which is 'a wonderful place to work, and it always is'. Respondents depend on the State Library for their research and 'get everything I need there', 'it has the information I need', 'the necessary references I need for my research. If not, it helps me get them'. Others are supported by being able to 'recharge phone' as well as the availability of 'computer access', and 'fast WIFI [which] is very supportive for my study and research'. 'The good WIFI makes attendance in the library possible - without it, I could not spend whole days working'. Some respondents suggest a range of ways the State Library supports their experience: 'My work here today depends on the library's support and services. It does [this] by supplying a place I can come work by supplying desks, internet, chairs and security'.

Collections access also features strongly, with one respondent indicating a personal affiliation with the institution and its resources, describing how the State Library 'completely supports my research but also my personal interest of looking at books, expecially [sic] old books and visiting the Mortlock Library for interest and to see old publications that I was involved in creating in previous occupations and work places'. The value associated with the State Library environment and facilities has a transformative effect on respondents' sense of well-being, suggesting they 'feel

safe, and I know I have time to finish what I need to get done', or 'I like to come here, because I found [sic] myself in a good mood'. For respondents not engaged in specific research, the public programs and exhibitions are supportive. The provision of incidental or serendipitous educational opportunities 'often draws attention to something new or looks at something old in a new way' such as 'the exhibition of political cartoons - fun, thought-provoking and a good retrospective of the current year'. Another saw a range of social and community benefits offered by the collaborative exhibition presented by the South Australian National Football League (SANFL) and the State Library: 'SANFL is the oldest football association in Australia (older than Victorian equivalent). It is the nation's indigenous sport. It touches people across the community and bridges the city / country divide'. Another respondent sees the State Library as a supportive social outlet for their family, whose 'children spend most of their time at home. Feel lonely. I try to get them to attend some activities. Value: kids feel happiness and act [sic] with parents'.

The second most dominant major theme for this question was Civic Trust and Public Service (78). This theme relating to responses that indicate the level of authenticity and trust perceived by the public, and the duty of care and responsibility demonstrated by the State Library to serve and support the public. These respondents are closely aligned with Holden's Institutional Value, indicating a high level of awareness of the civic role of the State Library as a public service, as well as the longitudinal value represented by the collections and expertise of the professional staff. Of all the major themes, this theme best encapsulates the reciprocal nature of the relationship between the institution and members of the public.
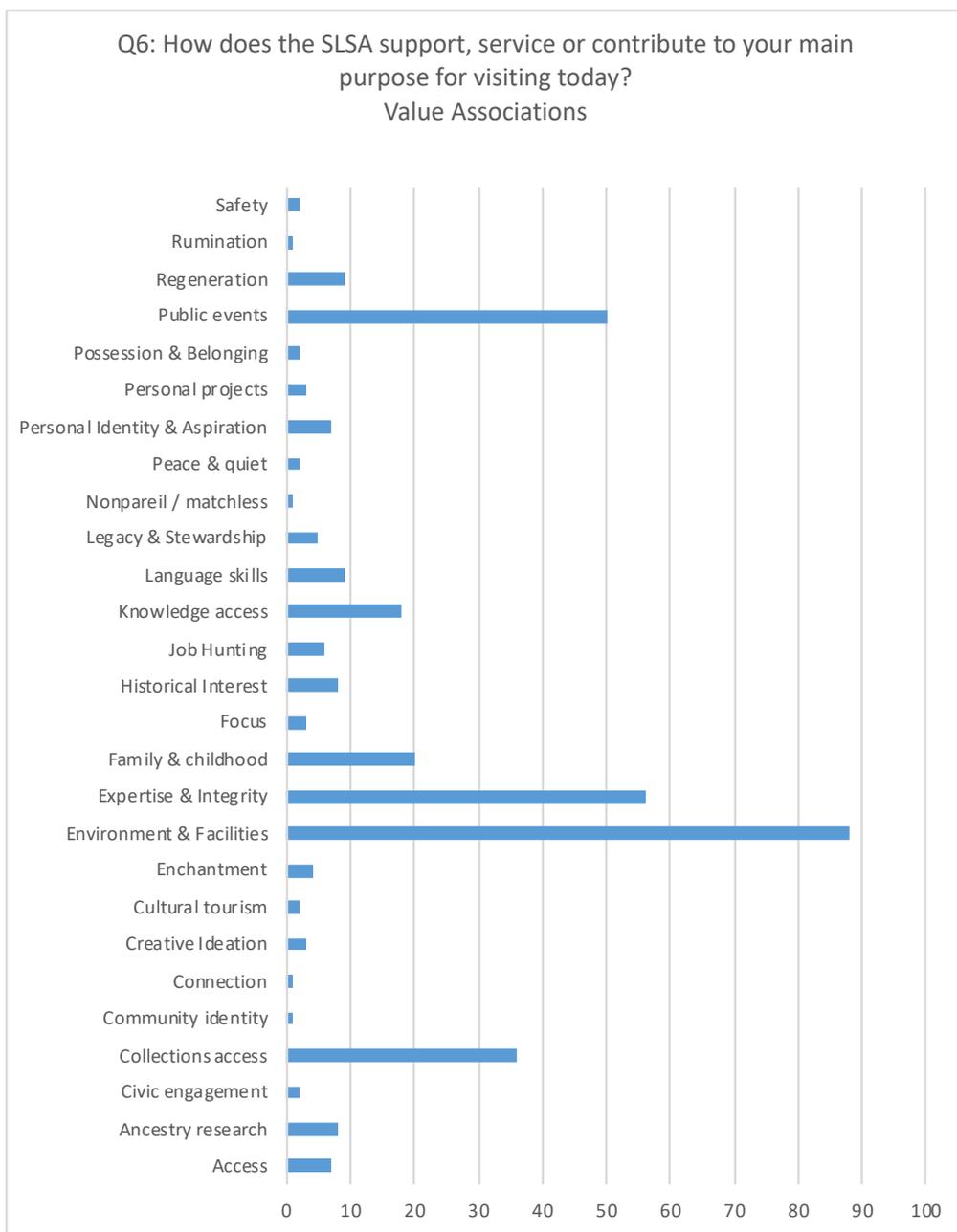
**Figure 13: Question 6, Number of responses aligned against value associations (how is that value manifest?).**

A high number of respondents (22) associate the beneficial support delivered by the State Library with the integrity and expertise of the staff and how they are 'making extraordinary papers from SA's past available for research. Cataloguing and digitising these so they are 'findable''. One respondent acknowledged those fulfilling the conservation and preservation work conducted behind-the-scenes, that their support is 'wonderful', while another appreciates 'the nice people here' who they find to be 'always professional and helpful. Their dedication to serving the public shines through. This statement includes the staff that works behind the scenes to acquire, catalogue and maintain the resources, not just those at the reference desk'. The 'experienced people are worth their weight in gold' and are able to support the public because they are

'knowledgeable and willing to help' when 'showing the public how to find particular information. And how to use the various resources', providing 'assistance when I needed clarity of resource location and help to load the microfilm'. The teams working to support the public experience are considered 'expert and helpful' and 'facilitate access to records from 'deep storage' or help navigate the catalogue, or help work the electronic equipment'. The value of this professionally facilitated access relates again to the State Library's original vision and ongoing function, supporting the public by 'making its materials accessible to the public'. As these value associations demonstrate, the public perceive more than the immediacy of the customer service provided by the librarians and people addressing enquiries; they are aware of the work that goes into the collections management and digitization programs, the expertise involved with the public events and exhibitions, all dependent on quality of the site and its facilities.

This data suggest that the State Library's public value is made manifest through a co-creative conjunction of information provision and collection management set within familiar and safe surroundings, serviced and equipped for free public access which collectively is supported by trained, knowledgeable and trustworthy professional teams.

### 5.1.7   Question 7 - What else would you like to tell us about what the State Library means to you?

The final question was the most open-ended, allowing respondents the opportunity to add to their previous thoughts regarding the value and meaning of the State Library. Not all responded – 59 from the 84 respondents. However, this additional opportunity to reflect on their experiences and relationship with the State Library elicited some of the most detailed and personal insights into how their relationship with the institution impacts on their lives. The data also indicates the significant symbolic role played by the State Library as part of the North Terrace Cultural Precinct, as the perceived keeper of the state's collective memory.

The significance of the State Library's location on North Terrace is reflected by the dominance of Community Resource / Site Value (72), the major value theme that underpins all perceptions of value. Unlike previous questions, however, in this instance, this theme was only narrowly more prominent that the institutional values represented by Civic Trust and Public Service (71), closely followed by Inspiration (67), the category most aligned with intrinsic and subjective cultural experience. These value perceptions may represent the cultural value of the State Library, demonstrating the intra-subjective nature of the public experience, as well as the

interdependence of public perceptions of value with equally connected services and experiences provided by the institution.



Q7: What else would you like to tell us about what the State Library means to you?
(Total 390 responses from 59 respondents)

- Community Resource / Site Value = 72
- Self-Improvement & transformation = 19
- Social & Cultural Connection / Exchange = 45
- Quiet Escape & Security = 25
- Inspiration = 67
- Education = 35
- Civic Trust & Public Service = 71
- Heritage & Continuity = 56
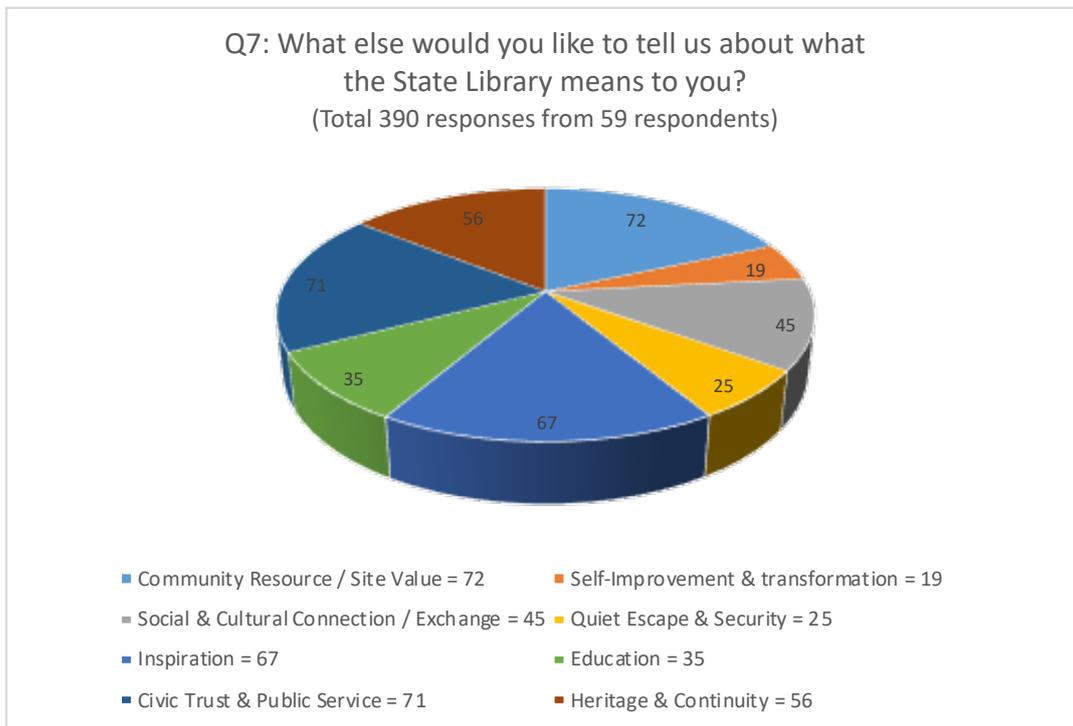
**Figure 14: Question 7, Major themes for public articulations of value.**

Respondents consider the State Library a 'great place to be' with 'an excellent mix of old and new'. The State Library is unparalleled: 'there's nowhere else that has such a great collection of items and the expertise to help people access and use them' and maintains its principles of democratic access as 'an area for citizens from all walks of life to share the learning space together'. The State Library is also significant, even for those who 'do not visit often, I like knowing it is there and that it probably always will be', anticipating immediate community benefits or a potential future need. Respondents claim to 'love that it's there' and recognise the benefit the State Library represents for future generations, stating they 'value its sense of continuity as place of learning, a safe place for free exchange of ideas beyond political, religious or ideological boundaries. It's also a place that preserves our history and makes it available'. Echoing the aspirations of the South Australian Literary Association, some respondents assert that 'it should serve as a cultural anchor, somewhere that can be treasured through [the] generations'. The State Library's symbolic and legacy value is also indicated by those describing it as 'a showcase of our State, it's heritage and its future'. Some respondents see it as a living connection to the past: 'I treasure the story that our forebears, setting out to found a new colony on the other side of the world, brought a trunk full of books with which to found a Library! What a foundation'. Responses such as these demonstrate

the temporal ambiguity of the State Library experience for some members of the public, and the mythic status acquired by the traditional understanding of the South Australian colonial history. As demonstrated earlier in this section, the perception of how the State was settled, and the realities of colonial settlement, may not match the idealism and aspirational quality of these responses. However, these responses indicate a public perception of the symbolic significance in the 'trunk full of books' that adds value to the experience of State Library today its contribution to respondents' sense of community identity.
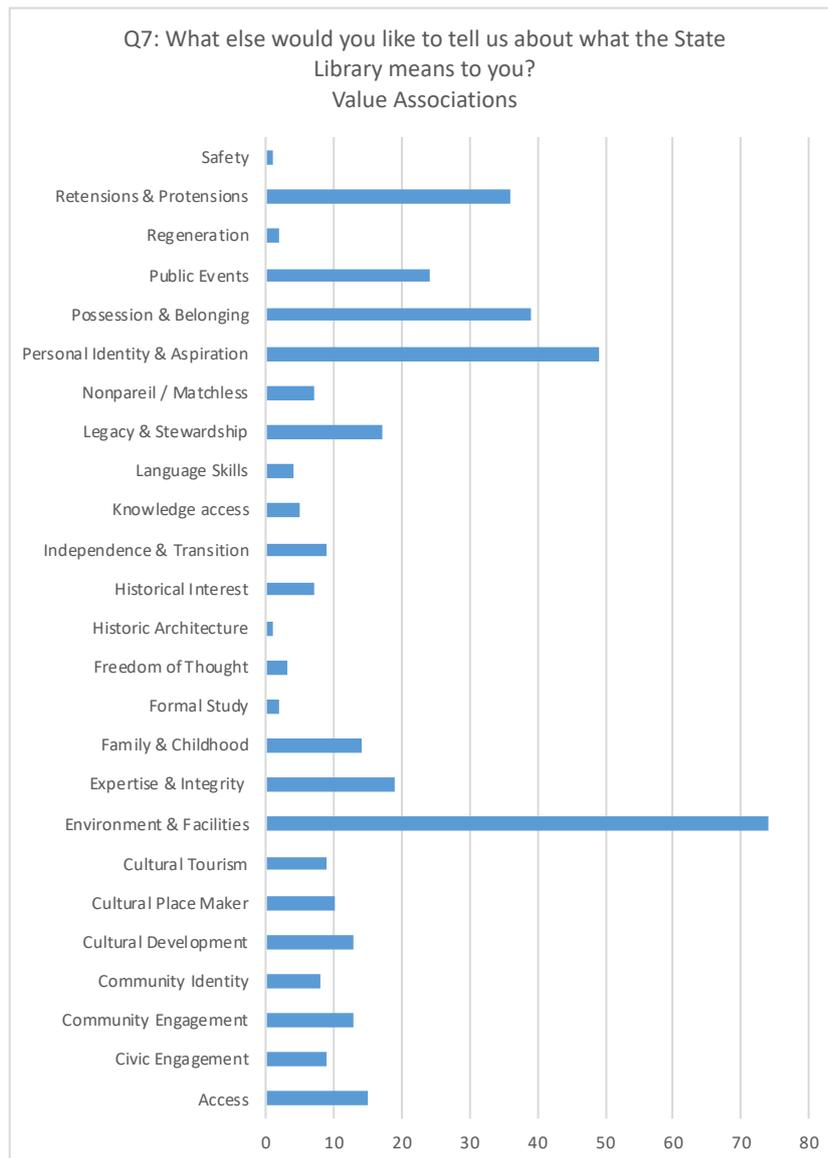


**Figure 15: Question 7, Number of responses aligned against value associations (how is that value manifest?).**

Identity and belonging feature highly in the value associations related to this question and provides the clearest insight into the subjective nature of respondent's relationship with the State Library. Respondents feel deeply about the institution, as evident in responses indicating the value

generated through the provision of 'access to my local historical records, of the people I know and places and events I love'. Others say they 'just love [it] and would spend a lot more time there if I could' or simply 'I really friggin love it c:'.[31] The personal resonance felt by the public is evident in responses describing how much they value the staff, believing them to be 'amazing and not adequately acknowledged by the people in charge of the state'. 'I would like to add my appreciation of the staff. I have made many friends over the years and especially appreciate their knowledge and advice'. 'If it was to suffer cuts in personnel or resources I would be devastated'.

The significance of the State Library in the experience of new arrivals to Adelaide is also indicated by statements highlighting the opportunities provided to gain understanding of our language, culture and customs. The institution is a site where 'I can make a close connection with Australian native people to learn their culture and specific accent'. In one of the most illustrative responses gathered as part of this research program, 'the State Library of South Australia give me a sense of blongness [sic] makes me a part of Australia'. This response articulates the value and influence an independent, free, supportive and welcoming environment can have for an individual's sense of self and community, when challenged by language or cultural differences. This is reinforced by respondents who gain meaning from the State Library as 'an area for citizens from all walks of life to share the learning space together', underpinning the theme of Social / Cultural Connection & Exchange. Although some respondents come for the language classes, they also offer learning opportunities for others taking part, as will be evident in the following narrative profiles of value.

 The transgenerational value of the State Library experience is also evident in responses describing meaningful family associations, such as 'I encourage my grandchild to attend the exhibitions with me which he enjoys, as he is also a great reader'. Another respondent suggests they 'would love to see more days/sessions where authors are celebrated and children can listen to shared stories'.

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[31] 'c:' represents a smile, as submitted as part of the electronic survey.

## 5.2   Summary

Survey respondents consider 'it is very important to have public institutions like the library'. 'Personally, I think it is a wonderful institution that needs to be valued', and that the State Library is 'simply a vital part of Adelaide's cultural fabric'. Many have held life-long value associations and are active in sharing them with their family and their community.



**How respondents value the State Library, by major theme**
**(2661 responses from 84 respondents)**

| | Quiet Escape & Security | Civic Trust & Public Service | Social/Cultural Connection & Exchange | Inspiration | Community Resource / Site Value | Heritage & Continuity | Education | Self-Improvement & Transformation | No. Respopnses per question |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Q1 | 10 | 18 | 6 | 21 | 51 | 20 | 42 | 8 | 176 |
| Q2 | 28 | 81 | 25 | 47 | 81 | 28 | 58 | 18 | 366 |
| Q3 | 21 | 21 | 9 | 73 | 60 | 44 | 54 | 17 | 299 |
| Q4 | 49 | 54 | 32 | 104 | 141 | 67 | 69 | 42 | 558 |
| Q5 | 19 | 71 | 75 | 86 | 77 | 81 | 70 | 39 | 518 |
| Q6 | 19 | 78 | 25 | 41 | 103 | 27 | 36 | 25 | 354 |
| Q7 | 25 | 71 | 45 | 67 | 72 | 56 | 35 | 19 | 390 |
| TOTAL | 171 | 394 | 217 | 439 | 585 | 323 | 364 | 168 | |

**Figure 16: Overview, Major themes for public articulations of value.**

Respondents also gain a sense of personal and cultural identity through the historical, cultural and democratic associations over time, represented by Community Resource / Site Value (585) which encompasses the shared collections (digital and analogue), the professional teams and the physical structures occupying the site on North Terrace. Respondents also seek and find themselves within the State Library, represented in my analysis by the theme Inspiration (438). This includes the accumulation of personal benefits derived from family research projects, as they transition through formal education (364) or as they move towards claiming a place amongst of the Australian community. The State Library is a valuable source of authentic information, a free institution fostering Civic Trust & Public Service (394) personified for respondents by the librarians

they encounter. These include visitor services and security teams they encounter, as well as the professional librarian and preservation teams behind the scenes. The public understand their essential work and appreciate how they contribute to their experience, even though they may never directly engage with them. The survey responses demonstrate the co-creative nature of the cultural value activated through their engagement with the State Library. This extends to encompass their experiences of the North Terrace Precinct and beyond their own lifetimes. This is demonstrated by the emergent theme, Heritage & Continuity (319), which connects respondents to past and future generations, creating their sense of community identity and confirming their place in the world.

The combined list of value associations for all questions (Figure 17, below) confirms what this process looks like in action, how the cultural value is made manifest within the State Library, and what is the highest priority amongst the public value perceptions:
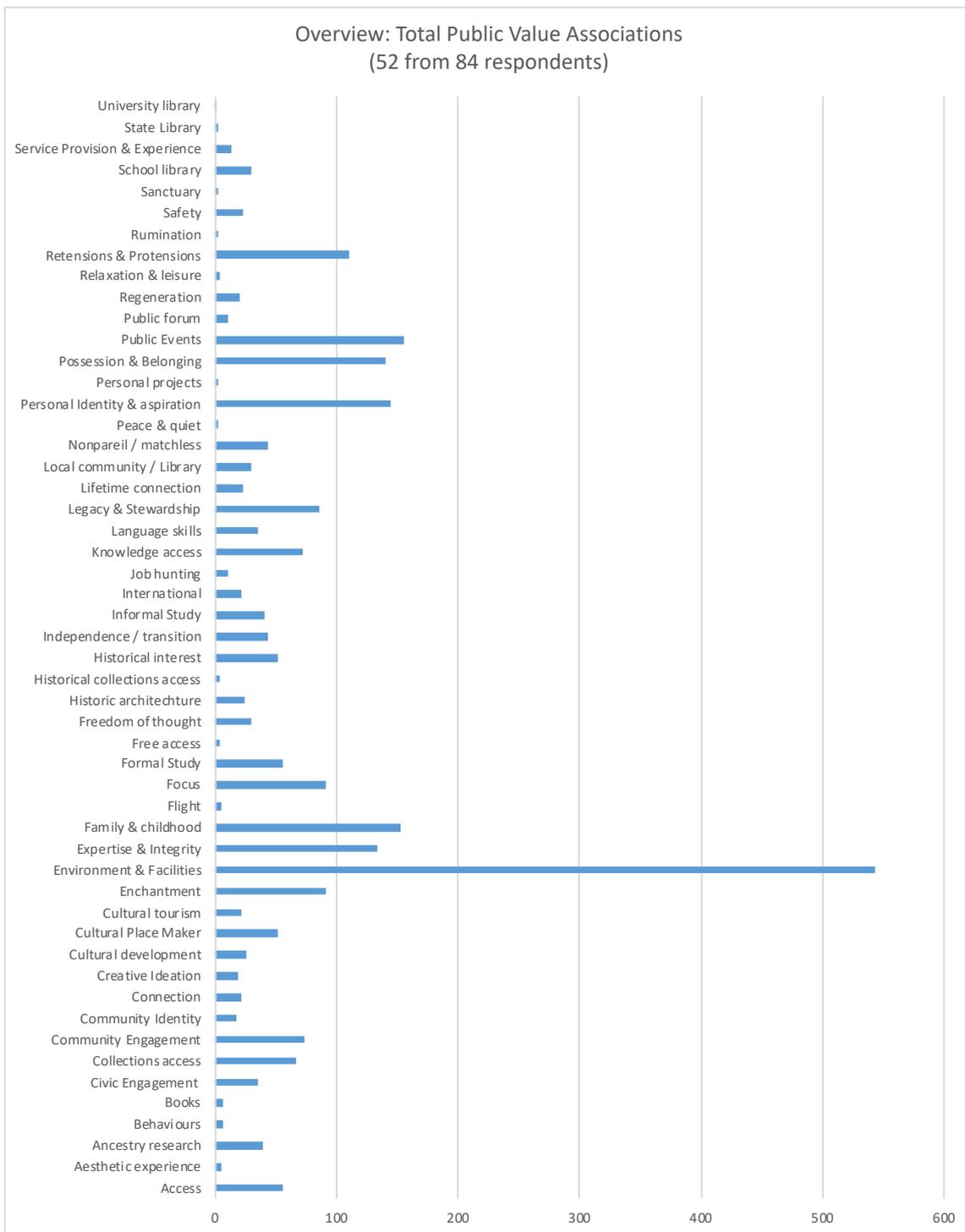
**Figure 17: Overview, Number of responses aligned against value associations.**

The survey data suggests that the value of the State Library of South Australia is in no doubt for the survey respondents. The public associate value with collectively sharing the spaces and resources, even though they experience them individually and differently at different point in their lives. This complex, varied and temporally ambiguous network of relationships is made up of their engagements with the physical library site over previous experiences and through accessing the collections. These points of intersection, be they interpersonal or digital, create value and

meaning through the exchange of knowledge facilitated by the institution. The unstructured public, and the professionals and volunteers with whom they interact, co-create an experience within the site where people gain a sense of belonging as well as foster a sense of ownership, in addition to finding answers to their 'thirst for knowledge'. This in turn informs the development of individual understanding on the subjective level and public value for the community, potentially over generations, embedding the State Library 'a source of civic pride' and 'an essential part of 'my' South Australia'. My analysis suggests that what Dolin describes as 'the invisible work of culture formation' is not only alive and well at the State Library, but is understood, appreciated and supported by the public who engage with it (2006, p. 283).

For a greater understanding of individual experiences of the State Library and their value for the public, we invited survey respondents to also participate in short interviews. These were aimed at drawing out more detail whilst providing me as the interviewer with the opportunity to personalise the questions and encourage the subjects into a broader conversation. What follows are the Narrative Profiles of Value, based on the presentation of Walmsley's findings from his investigation into the 'deep hanging out' approach (2016). These profiles extrapolate the survey data and reflect the fluidity and interconnectedness of the creative and cultural experience within the library, for individual users and the broader community, especially within the context of the North Terrace Cultural Precinct.

# 6   PUBLIC INTERVIEWS

What follows is a series of 13 personal narrative profiles of the State Library public. The interviews provide a wealth of insight into the:

- The quality and subjectivity of individual experiences;

- The intersectionality of experiences over a lifetime, including an element of transnationality which allows interviewees to access states of comfort and belonging through their experience of the library, regardless of their country of origin;

- The value of the library as a co-creative network of library professionals, volunteers and support teams contributing their expertise, advice and interpersonal skills across the organisation and over generations; and

- The public's perception of the cultural value of the State Library is intrinsically associated with the North Terrace Cultural Precinct, resulting in a cross-institutional sense of public ownership, civic pride and community identity.

As described in the Methodology chapter, I conducted these interviews on site at the State Library, guided by a set of open-ended semi-structured questions to allow for a naturalistic conversational flow. In accordance with the Laboratory Adelaide Ethics Coverage for this research project, the names of interview subjects have been changed and an alias applied, out of respect for their privacy.

The interviews were based on the same questions presented in the surveys. However, their deliberately open-ended nature allowed for the pursuit of further enquiry and exploration with each interview subject. I established a comfortable atmosphere for conversational flow, using empathy and 'small talk' to put the subjects at ease. This approach succeeded in drawing out the symbolic nature of the State Library experience in order to understand the meaning and value that is activated for this representative sample of the contemporary library public. Building on the stories derived from the survey responses, these narrative profiles of value offer detailed insights into the individual library experience and the collective benefits generated by the State Library of South Australia.

## 6.1 Narrative profiles of value

### 6.1.1 LUKE – 'When you enter a space like this you see the possibilities'

Luke recently returned to Australia after several years teaching English at universities in Japan and South Korea. He is yet to decide if he would live in his hometown of Brisbane for make the move to Adelaide. Luke arrived in the city only 90 minutes before the interview took place. The Library was the first site he wished to see as part of his decision-making process as to whether he would make Adelaide his home.

Luke describes himself as 'very much a bookworm' having 'always loved libraries'. He used 'the one in Brisbane quite a bit' during his studies as a linguistics major.

> I really love journals. I love reading, anything related to language learning and teaching, so I wanted to see how extensive your collection was here.

He was mildly disappointed by the limited amount of natural light in the building but was looking forward to seeing the Mortlock Wing. He expressed an interest in visiting the Art Gallery of South Australia as well and enjoys taking part in public events, demonstrating his willingness to engage with a range of cultural opportunities. When asked about the kind of interactions that were important to him, his response demonstrates the significance of the visitor services teams, as well as the value Luke placed on opportunities for community engagement offered by cultural institutions:

> I guess with other people, the friendly staff, very dedicated and available, which I've found has been the case today. I did ask a couple of questions and they were really helpful. That's probably the main thing. Events with guest speakers are really important too – authors, researchers, musicians or whatever, just to make it a bit more of a focal space for more people, so I'd like to see more of that.

As a teacher and researcher, Luke recognises the presence of the Laboratory Adelaide team at the library as a positive sign, reaffirming my belief as both researcher and practitioner in the importance of directly engaging with the public :

> […] the fact that you guys are here and you're obviously taking it very serious[ly], about the role of the library in the community and you want to see improvement. It's a really encouraging sign […] the whole concept of libraries as the hub of the community. […] I visited the Brisbane State Library many times over the course of the years and I've never been asked to do an interview, and I think that says it all.

Libraries in general and, since his visit, the State Library in particular, offer Luke a range of personal and professional support services that he encourages others to use. He is aware of the

different functions and purposes afforded by a reference library as opposed to a lending library. The site value and services provided by both types of institution serve different ends for Luke. He appeared to be devising strategies for how to make the best use of the available library facilities in the city, depending on his developing needs. This became clear when asked if he shares his experiences of libraries with others:

> I'm an English teacher by trade and I'll bring my students, of course, to visit a place like this all the time. It would be great if there were borrowing facilities as well, but there aren't usually with State Libraries, I understand that. But I can also recommend to students the lending library in the mall. [...] That would be a good first step, then we could come across here for research [...] so this would be a very good place for them to do their research.

Luke's responses indicate a level of planning and forethought prior to his visit. He was not simply considering what was available; he was envisioning how he would make use of the facilities, should he make Adelaide his new home. His encounters with the State Library team members that morning had contributed to his formation of a positive first impression of the city and his ability to live here. His experiences within the State Library were positive and where they may have fallen short (regarding borrowing and natural light) he actively devised alternatives to meet his need. A significant part of his planning involved communicating the library's value to others, particularly his students. Should he move to Adelaide, he would become an advocate for the value of the city's library facilities in general, but specifically for the facilities and opportunities provided by the State Library.

Luke's life-long belief in the importance of the role libraries play in the community is illustrated when asked about the importance of libraries to his life, postulating how important the State Library may be to the life of this city:

> Oh, really crucial. I'm very much a bookworm. I've always loved libraries. I think the actual space itself, the fact that it's on this really prestigious street in the middle of town, that's got to act like a focal point. Just, yeah, for me, the diversity of knowledge here that is available, that's always a huge stimulus for me and it always brings me back [...] because I was born on a farm and it was very … not much in the way of books [...] Yeah, so when you enter a space like this you see the possibilities.

Luke is clearly drawn to libraries and knew of the Mortlock Wing prior to his arrival in Adelaide, suggesting that it was 'one of the most beautiful reading rooms in the world'. However, the story he would tell his students or others about the State Library would showcase the people he encountered who had facilitated his orientation within the space:

> Well, just the friendliness, it's notable, not just here but on the streets of Adelaide too, everyone is really, well, they have time to respond to questions, they don't rush you. It also seems as though there's not a lot of people waiting for help, so for a larger population centre that's usually a problem - they don't usually have enough time to devote to each person. There's always someone else waiting in line. So I feel here that's not the case. They can really devote themselves to each person.

Luke's responses are informed by his travel and life-long love of learning and books. His experiences overseas add weight to the significance of his responses in that his interest in the State Library may reflect previous experiences of moving to new cities. He may have taken a similar approach to getting to know the cities he had lived in whilst in Japan and South Korea, but experienced negative impacts on his library experiences there, possibly due to the higher density of population impacting staff availability to address visitor enquiries. [32]

Luke is a self-confessed library lover and was struck by the friendliness, patience and level of attention granted by the visitor services team at the State Library. This supported his investigation regarding his interest in moving to Adelaide as well as the suitability of the city's library services. This was a significant factor in his decision-making process: he perceived the State Library as suitable to serve his needs as well as those of his potential future students. He recognised the State Library as a community information resource, a hub of cultural activity that was 'notable' for its friendliness and the professionalism of the team members he encountered. The impression made by the State Library on Luke complemented the impression made by Adelaide and influenced his decision as to whether he would move South Australia.

### 6.1.2 MICHELLE – 'Libraries … are very important to me'

Michelle is new to Adelaide, having moved from Ohio (US) to be with her partner. Their mother had suggested she 'come check it out'. On her first visit she brought her own book and quietly read. On this second visit, the State Library offers a quiet and secure place where she could sit and write Christmas cards. Michelle is not studying or pursuing any particular enquiry. She is exploring her new city through engaging with a trusted and familiar space where she feels comfortable and secure during a time of transition and personal dislocation. When asked what kind of experiences

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[32] Without knowing the cities Luke lived in overseas it is not possible to conduct a direct comparison of population density to compare with Adelaide. Instead, the national populations levels provide an indicator of the contrasting densitylevels. In 2018, the population of South Korea was 51,263,435 with a population density of 503 people per square kilometre. Japan's population was more than double that, at approximately 127,024,952 with a population density of 340.8 people per square kilometre. Australia's population in 2018 was less than half of South Korea's at 24,945,497 with a population density of just 3.22 people per square kilometre, thanks to Australia's large landmass.

or interactions at the library were important to her, she responded that 'just being in a space that is designated for reading and writing helps me to focus'.

Michelle's responses closely align with the theme of Quiet Escape and Security, whereby she feels safe and relaxed in a library space, connecting with familiar experiences from her past which are important to her. This allows Michelle to focus on connecting and communicating with people who are important to her (through Christmas cards) yet are removed by distance. The disruption of moving continents and subsequent conflicts of personal identity is allayed by the familiarity of a library space.[33] The library acts as a conduit, connecting her to her support network overseas as she navigates her new life and relationship. This sense of connection and familiarity across time and space was also noted in the survey data, particularly in relation to new arrivals and international students.

Like Luke, the comfort and familiarity Michelle experiences within the State Library developed over the course of her lifetime. When questioned about the importance of the State Library to her life as well as the cultural life of Adelaide, she demonstrated her life-long connection with libraries and a love of books, particularly when experiencing tight economic circumstances or a liminal stage of personal transition:

> I can't really speak to this library, as I haven't spent a lot of time here. But libraries in general are very important to me. You know, all throughout high school I went to the main branch library downtown, to take out books, do research projects and to borrow books if I couldn't afford to buy books myself. […] Yeah, or it's great too if you are reading something by a new author, someone you haven't heard of before and you don't really want to invest in a book of theirs.

The State Library was again presented by a newcomer to the city as a gateway into the cultural life and history of Adelaide, a gateway accessed through interacting with a State Library team member. Michelle visited to see the well-known Mortlock library and was invited on a tour through the buildings 'by a lady down at the front', most likely a volunteer guide:

> She was very excited to give me a tour, so she showed me around the whole place. They were having a sort of special exhibition of toys from the past upstairs, which was really cool. Then she left me in the Mortlock Wing and I had a look around at the different displays.

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[33] I empathised with this experience, having lived for three years in California. The familiarity of museum and library spaces there provided a sense of connection to both my old and new communities, acting as a point of orientation to understand my new surroundings, supporting me through the challenge of transitioning to a new way of life.

Michelle was clearly stimulated and excited by that first visit and the personal guided tour she was able to enjoy, discovering far more than the anticipated quiet and secure place to read. When asked about the single story or anecdote she would share about the State Library with others, her response positioned her as an advocate of not just the State Library, but Adelaide in general:

> That Mortlock Wing is so gorgeous, that they should go look at it and check out the displays on the ground floor of it because that is where you can see the history of Adelaide and it's kind of cool to see. There's one photograph of the CBD, I don't know when it is [taken], but I think it is several decades ago, and you can see how spare it is.

The library elicited several responses from Michelle that indicate the institution's capacity to act as a point of geographical and cultural orientation for newcomers to Adelaide, doing so with a level of comfort and security they recognise from previous experiences in different parts of the world. Michelle is a young woman exploring a new relationship in a new country separated from all that is familiar to her. However, the security and comfort she experienced within State Library allows her to focus and consolidate the personal resilience to support herself through this transition. And the State Library volunteer guide was critical in delivering that sense of location, security and welcome.

### 6.1.3  PAMELA: 'I seem to be one of those funny breeds that likes to see people face to face'.

Pamela works in the library as a volunteer with the English Language Improvement Service, known as ELIS. Her role is to help new arrivals from non-English speaking backgrounds to improve their English language skills. The State Library offers this program free of charge, providing self-help materials and conversation classes facilitated by trained volunteer tutors. This program may be seen as a modern day reflection of the self-improvement and mutual support education model that underpinned the formation of the State Library.

Pamela sees the value of this service in more than improved language skills, and instead as a program for:

> Migrants who want to settle here to participate in our culture in a much more meaningful way for them and find it easier to integrate because many of them arrive here with not an awful lot of idea about Australia.

Pamela's perception of the value she provides for the ELIS participants and the State Library reflects the value of volunteers to the community, in line with the Volunteering Australian National Standards' definition of Volunteering as 'Time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain', which is considered:

> A critical part of Australian society. It contributes to civil society and active participation in building strong, inclusive, and resilient communities. It underlies innovation and social change, our responses to community need and community challenges, and it brings together and supports the local strengths and assets of communities. There are important benefits to both organisations and to volunteers when volunteers become involved in organisations. Volunteer involvement can contribute to, and extend the capacity of, organisations to meet aims and goals. Volunteers can provide the time, skills, expertise and points of view that enable an organisation to pursue programs and activities that benefit the community.

Pamela found that many new migrants had been exposed to American culture through mainstream Hollywood movies, with the result that Australia seemed to be a 'cultural blank'. Audunson sees the role of public libraries as an entry point for new migrants as one of the first functions of libraries in the United States, where institutions were established to educate new arrivals in the mid nineteenth century to foster culturally informed US citizens (2005, p. 430). Likewise, the classes Pamela hopes to encourage participants to gain a genuine sense of Australian culture, even though she occasionally found it a challenge to describe our culturally diverse society:

> As we have people from all countries of the world and they speak all different languages, they all have different food that they eat and the different clothes that they wear and things

like that. They always want to know 'oh what's your favourite Australian food?' and I say well I eat at Jerusalem. Lebanese food is my favourite food, so I try to let them know that it's not a homogenous society, but it's also a really exciting thing to learn about because we are a multicultural society. We're not homogenous and what you will do in your home is not what I will do.

Pamela is an ELIS Desk Tutor, seeing people on an ad hoc basis for thirty minutes. She sees many participants on a regular basis, indicating the strength of positive experiences on return visitation and the value of social interactions and connections made through the service. She does not see herself as a teacher and there is no preparation or lesson planning; Desk Tutors simply cater to whoever books a time slot. Those attending the service are encouraged to arrive with an enquiry to drive the conversation, rendering the conversation practical as well as educational. These topics may range from employment to immigration issues. Pamela's description of the service implies a bespoke, personalised approach to knowledge transfer. This fosters a high level of cultural exchange, one that within a more formal educational setting may be considered a student-centric pedagogical approach to language instruction:

> It can be very interesting because you are talking to people from many different countries. For example, we had a guy from Iran, and I worry now because he hasn't been for 12 months, he was older and I just worry that he's died. And he'd come out every three months to be with his family here […]. And he'd talk to me all about his family in Iran and his daughter who is a doctor. He came here to practice his English and talk about their New Year which is the twenty-first of March and what they did and the carpets they'd put on their wall […] so that's a very exciting part of things, but it can be anything.

Pamela shares other such examples of conversations she's had with participants in the ELIS program, demonstrating the richness of the social and cultural transfer and exchange that takes place in the State Library, as well as the phenomenological nature of these interactions. All volunteer desk tutors are required to adjust their responses reflexively to be able to assist on both aspects – the improvement of the participants' expression and the nature of their queries. In doing so she builds a personal rapport and connection with participants, as demonstrated by her concern about the older Iranian gentlemen. These personalised interactions between participants and representatives of the State Library foster social and cultural understanding within the community. Pamela's description embodies the instrumental benefits of the language classes activated by the volunteer tutors and participants, generating social capital and community cohesion through knowledge exchange and interpersonal connection through the pursuit of language improvement. There are also the instrumental benefits associated with the positive impression of Adelaide and Australia created through these exchanges. These impressions may then be transferred from participants to their immediate communities in Adelaide, as well as to

their countries of origin, addressing what Pamela describes as the 'the cultural blank' of Australian culture.

Pamela finds the diversity of people and queries both exciting and very interesting. She gauges her success in addressing participants' queries by their immediate feedback and is rewarded by their level of enthusiasm. When asked whether the participants share the benefits they gain from the classes, she laughingly describes a challenge I've found to be common in the pursuit of cultural evaluation:

> It's funny but they have that good Australian knack of not giving good feedback (laughter). You'll get complaints if they're not happy with it, but it seems to be a fairly standard global cultural thing that if you're doing a good service, you don't hear about it.

As will be demonstrated by other interview subjects, ELIS participants are often isolated and use the classes as opportunities to connect and interact socially, sharing personal or professional challenges with the tutors as topics for discussion in lieu of trusted friends or family members:

> I had a young guy who came to see me this afternoon. I saw him three weeks ago and he's been back to China [...] he had a disappointing experience applying for Melbourne University to do a degree and he needed to talk about that. I take it from his enthusiasm and the way he felt he could come and talk to me about it [...] he needed to talk out his disappointment about what happened. It wasn't necessarily about helping him with his English or those sorts of things, but he needed an outlet and I felt a bit constrained about how I could answer him about what happened to him. If I was talking to him privately, I would have been a little bit more forthright with what I said to him, but [...] as a volunteer, I've got a little bit more 'public face.

Pamela is conscious that she is a representative of the State Library delivering a service, interacting with a member of the public, and takes her role seriously. Her 'public face' implies a level of self-monitoring required by the volunteer tutors, who receive training for their role by shadowing other volunteers and via an induction from the ELIS coordinator.[34] She is mindful of the responsibilities of her position and sensitive to the needs and well-being of the program participants.

Pamela volunteers two days a week for the ELIS program but plans to cut back, due to her volunteering with the Adelaide City Council, where she worked as a visitor information provider at the Central Market. She is a socially confident and outgoing person who enjoys helping people, in

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[34] According to the Onsite Services Librarian coordinating the recruitment, induction and rostering of the ELIS Program, Desk Tutors are selected from a pool of applicants on file. They are required to have a current Working With Children Police Clearance (personal correspondence, 2 February 2019).

a role 'that's all about communication and I really like that, and you get to talk to people from all over the world'.

When asked about the benefits provided or generated by the State Library for the South Australian community, Pamela offered a specific response which demonstrates the integrated nature of library service delivery as well as the cross-institutional approach she engages as a tutor:

> I think the provision of free newspapers is really good because they have an absolutely fabulous collection of everyday newspapers. They have all the Australian newspapers, […] they have The Australian, the Financial Review, the Sydney Morning Herald and The Age, which is the Melbourne paper, as well as all The Advertiser and The Sunday Mail. From my point of view, helping people with their English, I try to direct them there to learn about Australian culture, particularly the weekend papers. They always have very good cultural magazines which are absolutely fantastic to point them to, to help them with their reading. It is very difficult to convince people who want to talk that actually, reading is the best thing they can do to help them with their talking.

Utilising the library collections this way, in this case the daily newspapers, is evidence of the diversity of value one service is capable of providing for the public. Pamela starts her day at the library by reading the newspapers: 'I really like to read the newspapers because I don't subscribe to newspapers online'. This prepares her for role, enabling her to recommend to the ELIS participants to learn about Australian culture and improve their English. The newspaper is also a trace for the future archive while simultaneously becoming a teaching and learning tool for the present ELIS Program, which according to the coordinator, does not have a budget for teaching and learning resources. This articulation of perceived personal and community benefits provided by the State Library demonstrates:

- the enterprising nature of the tutors, devising didactic methodologies without the support of a dedicated budget,
- the newspaper collections as a multi-purpose teaching and communications tool,
- an accessible means of social/cultural transfer and exchange for students, and
- a continuation of the mutually supportive approach to learning that informed the library's first development, and its potentially transformative value for the lives of students through the improvement of their language skills and their growing cultural awareness.

The diverse benefits of the newspaper collection and the intangible value they generate for ELIS students reflect the adaptivity of the collections over their functional lives. They also demonstrate the creativity of the team members across the library ecosystem, making the most of available resources in order to maintain services. Such innovation is frequently demanded of the cultural

sector during times of economic austerity and has rendered many institutions dependent on volunteers.

Pamela confirms what may be implied from several of the interviews with international visitors and survey respondents; many new arrivals show a lack of confidence and comfort in their new surroundings. Their lack of proficiency in speaking English may exacerbate social isolation and personal dislocation at a time when they may need a great deal of support. However, Pamela's empathy and experience with the program has led her identify the benefits of direct personal engagement:

> They will come, very lacking in confidence, but they will sit there and speak for thirty minutes. It's then getting them to stop and listen, to have that two-way conversation with people and be able to listen and answer questions. That's really the basis of it. They think it's their speaking, but it's the listening and responding part of it they need the practice with.

From Pamela's description, the ELIS program provides more than assistance with language skills to the community. Through the development of networks between students and tutors, participants improve their capacity to engage and feel part of the new community, overcoming their lack of confidence, isolation and dislocation. Further qualitative investigation beyond this thesis would be required to determine the long-term impacts and potential benefits on both individuals and the broader community. However, the impacts Pamela alludes to are supported by the findings of the of the United Nations State of the World's Volunteerism Report (2011) that found:

> There is mounting evidence that volunteer engagement promotes the civic values and social cohesion which mitigate violent conflict at all stages and that it even fosters reconciliation in post-conflict situations. By contributing to building trust, volunteer action diminishes the tensions that give rise to conflict and can also contribute to conflict resolution. It can also create common purpose in the aftermath of war. Indeed, people bound together through active participation and cooperation at local level are in a better position to resolve differences in non-confrontational ways (2011, p. 4).

There is potential that some ELIS participants engaging with the State Library may have experienced war and forced migration. Pamela's contribution as a volunteer can therefore be seen as a component of the State Library's contribution to the civic harmony and social cohesion of the State, providing opportunities for new arrivals to build trust and cooperation through the ELIS program. When exploring Pamela's experience as a member of the general public at the State Library, the origins of her empathy for ELIS participants and perception of their social isolation are clarified. Pamela grew up in Port Lincoln and enjoyed a career in the Public Service before leaving to train as an English as a Second Language tutor. She came to the State Library to overcome her own sense of social isolation:

> I became an Other, and I still am, outside the social norms in this society and I have trouble …
> I don't have a group of people who I find are really supportive and who, um, understand me.
> So I guess, particularly coming to the library after I did my degree, that was my way of
> overcoming that, and reading the newspapers so it sort of became a social … and I used to
> feel that I'd been out and at least socialising with people and things like that. So it's a bit of a
> different relationship.

The State Library offers Pamela the opportunity to socialise and interact with others at a time when, like the new arrivals she assists as a volunteer, she was feeling alone and dislocated from the community. She identifies with the new arrivals as 'Others', not quite belonging within the 'social norms in this society'. This admission is also inspiring, in that she too is not just aiding others transitioning to a new community. Pamela is also gaining the support she requires as a self-identified 'Other', demonstrating the exchange value and reciprocal nature of volunteering. When asked what experiences she most values about the State Library, she offered a personal insight into her sense of social isolation:

> I like volunteering here because otherwise […] I could go days with not having, other than
> going down to the local bakery and reading the paper and saying 'hello, how are you? I'll
> have a sandwich' or something like that, I could actually go for days not talking to anybody.
> So I find in that sense it's really important to me that I do this sort of work so I do actually
> have some social interaction with people. But I do find as I'm getting older it's really
> important to talk, because if you're not talking consistently to people, your voice muscles get
> tired and that's what I find now, because it's not easy for me to have ongoing conversations
> with people. I find when I do, my voice muscles get tired. […] I'm worried that I'm going to
> lose that ability and with everybody living longer and getting older … so that's another aspect
> of being able to socialise with people is being able to physically talk to people so your voice
> box keeps healthy and I find that, that is on the back of my mind.

While acknowledging these intrinsic and subjective benefits of engaging with the State Library, Pamela also recognises the financial challenges faced by cultural institutions, increasingly dependent on volunteers to deliver essential services. The ELIS program may not be considered the main function of the State Library, but remains as a public service contributing to the common good rather than the State Library's financial prosperity:

> I think that we have a naive liberal democracy strain within us that sees us not valuing the
> skills that we've got and we should ask to be paid for what we've got to offer people because
> teaching another language is a very skilled thing. It requires a lot of patience and knowledge
> and thinking on your feet […] as much as I think they're darlings, I think they are very naïve
> about where we sit within the global world these days and we should be valuing the skills
> that we've got.

Pamela's mixed sentiments regarding the value of her volunteering illustrate the quandary of requiring intangible or latent value generation to be recognised with a corresponding financial reward. Everyone within our community could be seen as beneficiaries from having new arrivals

feeling welcomed into our society, that we all enjoy a stable way of life and relish an identity that focusses on a fair go and equal opportunity amongst all citizens and visitors. In the absence of causal links, we may only hypothesise that such instrumental benefits are the result of services like the ELIS program at the State Library. However, according to Pamela, they are not recognised by the community (or the library) as being so valued as to require investment or recompense.

When asked about the best experience she has had at the State Library, Pamela suggested a recent afternoon function for volunteers:

> They had a fantastic contemporary ensemble playing with a female singer and a cellist, rhythm guitarist and a drummer. [...] I really enjoyed listening to that music. That to me was really good. Also, when I started volunteering here I put my name down to be a tour guide [...] and I did the tour and that was really fascinating, looking at the way they were digitally archiving things and the newspapers going to microfiche and the book binding place and those sorts of things. So, you saw underneath the bottom of the library and that was really fascinating to do here. That was a great time for me.

Pamela also notes the importance of digitising the newspapers as a means of preserving the State's history. She appreciates the efforts of the library teams 'trying to digitalise everything and put all the newspapers on microfiche. That's a really important thing, to keep our history, so it all doesn't get eaten up by silverfish'. This indicates an awareness of the role the library plays in the preservation and creation of heritage value. Her focus on the newspaper collection again implies an appreciation for the value the library places on ephemeral material objects. These resources have been the tools facilitating her cultural and social connection, as well as educational possibilities for her ELIS students.

When asked how important the library is to her and the cultural life of Adelaide, Pamela responded that 'we probably won't know until it's not here anymore'. She is aware of the funding cuts to the State Library's budget and their impact on both staffing levels and resources:

> Having been here and seen what's happened to the library over the last year or so it makes you really think about how important these places are to people and what a valuable resource... and also a little bit sad about how underused they are by people. Certainly the number of people coming to the library has eased off [...]When I first came here we'd have fifteen to eighteen people lined up for twelve spots between one and four o'clock. This year ... we don't understand why there's been that fall off.

Pamela attributes the convenience of digital technologies influencing the social interaction she so clearly values:

> Our technology is encouraging people to sit at their computer and do it and not go out and see another human being and I hate that. I'm home and unless I go out, I don't see another

human being and I seem to be one of those funny breeds that likes to see people face to face. […] They're becoming less and less.

When asked for the story or anecdote she would share with someone about the library, Pamela would tell people that the State Library is:

> A great place to come if you are in need of intellectual stimulation… You feel like you've been out for the day [which] is not recognised about the place and appreciated, that it can be very stimulating place, and you feel like you've been out in the world. That's what I like coming here for.

Pamela's most valuable contribution to the library community, and Adelaide by extension, may be the genuine pleasure she brings to her delivery of the visitor experience. As well as being a source of personal enjoyment and social connection, Pamela's ability to appreciate all facets of the library's activities and relay them back to visitors is of great benefit to all involved. The intra-subjective nature of her experiences could be considered an exchange of goods of the same value, collectively building on individuals' investments of time, energy, expertise and courage, held in trust until their value is realised.

### 6.1.4   SOPHIA – 'Nobody ask for your visa'

Sophia is living in Adelaide for two years and came to the State Library to take part in the free English Language and conversation classes. Like Michelle and others, even though she came with a specific purpose and need, she found more than she expected to enjoy and discover.

Sophia is originally from Spain and has moved to Adelaide for her husband's work commitments with a Spanish company who have relocated members of their team to South Australia. Sophia decided to work during her time in Australia. In order to obtain a working visa, she was required to achieve a high level of English skill:

> I began to come for the English classes […] I come for this, it's fantastic. […] I used to come monthly or perhaps twice a month but this month I want to come every day because I am going to take the IELTS in two Saturdays so I want to come […] to receive English classes. [35]

Sophia is a lawyer by training, a mother of two young boys and is drawn to the State Library for the peace and quiet while she studies for the IELTS:

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[35] IELTS is the International English Language Testing System, a certificate of which is 'required as part of the application for a working visa as well as for permanent residency in Australia. It is also a requirement for some Australian professional organisations and accrediting bodies'. (https://www.ielts.org/what-is-ielts/ielts-for-migration accessed 16 January 2019).

> I go to concentrate and there is a person who is working, seeing if there is any problem, if somebody is speaking and this morning it was fantastic. I could work so very, very good.

Like Michelle, the State Library offers Sophia a level of welcome, comfort and familiarity in a new country that appears to reinforce her sense of identity and purpose. She had visited at least one other public library in South Australia, but found it did not suit her needs:

> I went yesterday to Westlake [sic] Library and it was horrible because I didn't know there were libraries with activities for children. So I arrive … very worried for my exam and at 10 o'clock, all the children singing in the library (rueful laughter) oh I can't believe it. It's fantastic, I love that activity but it's just that I didn't know that here in Adelaide the libraries … because in Spain, it's … a library means silent [sic]. Is what I need now.

Due to her family circumstances, a quiet library space is vitally important to Sophia as she prepares for her exam:

> 'I can do at home, but at home I now have my sons, [they] are on holidays, and it's like, all the day 'Mum, blah, the food!' (laughter). So I wake up, I leave the food, I go to the library and I don't want to know anything [hear anything from her sons].

Sophia demonstrates again how important the English classes provided by the State Library are for new arrivals to Australia and how they function as a gateway into Adelaide community and cultural life. The volunteer teachers play a vital role in providing valuable assistance and creating a sense of welcome:

> The first time I came, the teacher, the English teacher was so friendly and welcoming. She understand [sic] me so well and she helped me a lot with the pronunciation like you can't say that, it was like 'Oh my God', was doing this for nothing like the volunteering work and for me it is so important. That was, I can't believe it, that you know here in this building it is so beautiful and so big and […] in the centre of Adelaide and to come take English classes here and you can say 'nobody ask for your visa' and (laughter) because I don't know, it's like the condition[s] for foreigners in Australia are so hard and sometime[s] you feel like illegal person […] 'I have 507 visa! I have 507 visa!' It's like... not for nothing but when you arrive at a place where nobody asks you nothing … (HR: You can just come and be yourself?) Yes, relax.

Sophia's responses demonstrate the many pressures faced by new arrivals, of which many local residents may not be aware. Her visa status, and how it determines her position in the community, looms large in her experience and she values the openness and welcome of the people she encounters at the State Library. She does not need to prove her eligibility or status and may use the space for any range of purposes. No one questions her right to do so. The value of this accessibility may be taken for granted by many amongst the library public but is notably precious to people from other countries, for whom such service and facilities are limited or

restricted. These democratic values link the State Library's contribution to the community today, to the principles of universal access to education and information that influenced its founding.

The value visitors and new arrivals perceive in the opportunity to engage with locals is a strong theme emerging from both sets of data. The State Library creates value for the public through their formal information delivery services. However, perhaps what is most significant for some respondents  are the serendipitous interpersonal interactions between visitor service teams and the public. The data indicates that the capacity of volunteers and team members to demonstrate empathy and identify with the needs of new arrivals, supporting them in a friendly and welcoming manner, is critical to the co-creation cultural value.

The State Library allows Sophia to direct her focus away from the demands of her family and work towards her IELTS exam under the guidance of the volunteer teachers. However, through her experiences at the English classes, she became aware of other opportunities offered by the library. She has since encouraged others to visit, to simply enjoy the space and 'pass the time':

> I am telling my Spanish friends the other day, 'please come to the library, is fantastic place, one of the best in Adelaide. You know, not all the people have the same circumstances and necessities. [...] I want to study [...] for example for the friends I have, most of the wives came for two years and usually they, it's like they pass the time, they don't do anything [...] so they come here to enjoy the time. But I want to be here because I want to study, because I want to work, so for me it is very important to have a place where I come to study'.

Sophia's drive to study reflects her background as a lawyer as well as her relationships with libraries and other cultural institutions from her past, informing her subjective experiences in Adelaide. When asked how important the State Library is to her and may be to the cultural life of Adelaide, her response reflects her personal preferences when it comes to institution type, but also the ongoing nature of her education. Finding locations and spaces to support this pursuit, which contributes to her personal identity, is a significant and highly valued part of her life:

> It is very important because for example I really don't like so much the art gallery or the painting, or [those] kind of cultural activities. But I have always loved to study, so I don't know, it is part of the culture [where] I feel better. I have always been surrounded by books. I studied law (laughter) so I have to study a lot so [...] when I finish I say 'I'm never going to get a book [again] in my life. I'm fed up'. But some years, yes, I study again, because you are used to do [ing it] and you know you can never stop to learn  [...] Yes, it is part of me.

Through her interaction with the State Library, Sophia is not only creating value for herself, but exploring productive ways of using her limited time in Adelaide. Rather than 'simply passing the time', Sophia wants to actively engage with the community, to work and contribute, which

appears to be a strong part of her personal identity. When asked about what she would tell others about her experience at the library, she nominates the teacher of the English class she encountered on her first visit. Her comfort and growing proficiency with English supports her search for employment in Adelaide. However, the experiences at the State Library are likely to inform how she represents Adelaide and South Australia to others in her expatriate community, those who may take a similar path from Spain as part of a professional placement. Perhaps the greatest value activated by her experiences at the State Library, though, will be within her own family; by providing a powerful example of the value of self-improvement and transformation afforded by the State Library and other libraries her children will experience throughout their lives. Sophia wants to share the space with her sons, providing them with their own entry point to both Adelaide and the library experience:

> So there was a group of students and one of them said 'Oh it's like […] Harry Potter! (laughter) Oh it's like the library in Harry Potter! Well is true! (laughter) is like, [sic] is beautiful too, that part of the library and so … last Monday I came with my son because I wanted that he could see the library of Harry Potter but was closed on Monday so is our bad luck, so next week! […] the youngest will be on holidays so next week they will come with me. […] the silen[ce] is a problem for them but I have seen this part (HR: the Hub?) this is perfect for them with the Wi-Fi and I will be studying upstairs.

Sophia is introducing her sons to a space she is familiar with and trusts. Her positive experiences of the State Library will inform their levels of engagement and socialisation with other library users and the Adelaide urban community. Sophia's sons will have the opportunity to learn how to be behave in the enchanting atmosphere of the 'Harry Potter' (Mortlock) Library. The Hub space, designed as a more social and interactive community space, is an environment where they can experience the benefits of the library facilities without the discomfort of moderating any boisterous behavioural tendencies. Both studious parent and her children are accepted and welcome at the State Library, unlike other environments where demands have been made to know their visa status. The State Library provides different environments to suit their needs and their respective stages of life. The institution reinforces Sophia's personal identity and capacity to engage with her new community, and is playing a formative role in her sons' relationship with Adelaide and every other library they will experience throughout their lives.

### 6.1.5  ALEX – 'It's something we can proudly show off'

It is not just lonely children enchanted by the State Library's "Harry Potter" associations. Alex is visiting the State Library as he prepares to return to the workforce. He enjoys the ambience while he revises and updates his knowledge of the finance industry. He completed his tertiary qualifications several years and is hoping to improve his job prospects.

> I came into the State Library because I like a nice quiet place to study. Sometimes the university is ok, but sometimes you just feel like a change and I find that the Mortlock Wing is just the perfect place to just sit down and study because it's just, it feels like Hogwarts. It's just a fantastic environment to study in.

Alex's response demonstrates several elements of the ongoing educational and transformation values afforded by the State Library, values that go back to the institution's origins in the mutual improvement and auto-didact movements of the nineteenth century described in the previous chapter. When asked what he was studying Alex described how:

> I'm not working at the moment, so I'm a former student in finance so I've just, I'm in the process of revisiting some stuff because I'm thinking about doing some further professional qualifications maybe at some stage […] just going over some old textbooks and things. Getting back into the swing of things, because it's been a while since I actually had hard core sat and studied.

In pursuit of improving his education and job opportunities, Alex visits the State Library 'at least once a week'. He has been engaging with libraries since he was a child and illustrates how concurrent the quality of first library experiences are with perceptions of value in adulthood. His earliest experience was:

> Probably a school visit to Tea Tree Gully Library, the public library out there. It's all been rebuilt since then […] It's moved across to bigger, newer premises. But I was in there the other day and I thought 'yeah, this is familiar and everything'. But it was when I was in the toy library that I went 'whoa, that's bringing back memories' because I forgot you can even borrow toys from the library and when I saw that one it reminded me of that visit when it was old and across the road. All the toys look the same.

When asked about the interactions he values during his visits to the State Library, Alex provides evidence of the co-creative nature of institutional value; the collective awareness, site-specific expectations and the importance of respectful behaviours amongst patrons. He suggests that this:

> Depends on which wing. Certainly, there is the Mortlock Wing and you've got different areas of the library. If I'm in there, the interactions of value with people are just if they keep quiet (laughter). I don't mind the slamming of a book or a cough every now and again, but if you're going to walk around in there and talk and take photos and stuff, just be discrete about it and that's what I value in there. But, in the other part I don't mind if someone comes in and sits down and has a chat with you. Because I know that there's desks where you can study in

there but it's a different level of … not professionalism, but you know, it's like a different level of … you know if I was studying for an exam, I would go to Mortlock. If I was studying for, you know, just having a read, doing a crossword or whatever, I would go into the other part.

Alex is aware of the various areas where there are behaviours and expectations associated with different purposes within the State Library. His responses demonstrate the degree of ownership and belonging felt by survey respondents for the State Library, as though they are not only co-creators of the experience, but also "co-custodians" of the space. His sense of community emerges, and he demonstrates a personal connection with both the site and the professional staff he interacts with regularly:

People here are really great because they're there if you need them. On a couple of occasions, I've spoken to people on the front desk and the first port of call for me is when I'm dropping my backpack off up [there], you know, I'm talking to the security guys. They're really friendly […] I don't know whether that's part of their job specifically, but they certainly go above and beyond in terms of how friendly they are. They're more like a concierge service really, you know, drop off your bags … they're all really friendly […] I value that.

This friendliness elicited by the security team is critical to the perception of universal access and welcome that underpins the State Library's institutional value. These interactions are dependent upon trust between both visitor and the security team, who, even though employed by an external firm, function as representatives of the institution. The security team, particularly those at the cloakroom, are often the first people visitors encounter. This first point of contact influences the public's impressions of the State Library. This in turn informs their whole experience of the institution, the memory of that visit and, as demonstrated within the survey data, the likelihood of their return.

Alex's experience of welcome and comfort in the space is also demonstrated by his enchantment with the site. When asked to share his best experience at the State Library, he suggested it was:

[W]hen I found out that the Institute Building was part of the library, that was pretty good. I was stoked with that. You can go through there and you've got galleries up here and I knew that, but I thought you had to go out and around and everything to see what was in there. But now, from time to time I'll leave that way specifically so I can see what's going on in there, because you know, they've had a virtual reality thing. They've had something on rockets […] I would never have thought to go out of my way to find that, but given it was there, you know, fantastic. So I'd wander around there and spend twenty minutes, half an hour reading stuff, learning about Woomera, and what goes on with rockets. It was all, it was a pleasant and exciting thing.

The State Library allows Alex to extend his professional knowledge and in doing so, he also gets to satisfy curiosities he may have nurtured but otherwise had no cause to explore, until the

opportunity presented itself. This serendipitous discoveries made through the exhibitions within the Institute Building illustrates the phenomenological aspects of cultural experience: value is often activated through unanticipated encounters and personal interactions, offering a perspective on cultural value. Kaszynska concluded that these phenomenological elements of cultural experience were missing from the cultural value debate (2015), making Alex's narrative of surprise and discovery a valuable contribution. Alex describes how this element of surprise is a valuable means of overcoming boredom, and is a product of the State Library's location:

> [It's] all part of the fun of coming in here. You never know. It's not just coming in to study. People are different. Things going on will be different and where it's situated as well. If you get bored with the study, which happens, just go along to the art gallery or the museum, you know? It's right next door.

It could be argued that in his random explorations of different areas within the State Library, as well as the Art Gallery of South Australia and the South Australian Museum , Alex is demonstrating fundamental aspects of human agency and curiosity. His studies are driven by instrumental aspirations – his professional goals and ambitions – yet he is more than a potential employee or economic unit. Through engaging with the North Terrace Cultural Precinct to access information and cultural experiences, Alex is exercising his free will as an active citizen, exploring the intellectual stimulation and the academic life of the community. This provides evidence of the networked nature of the State Library experience for the public, and its connections to the North Terrace Cultural Precinct:

> I think the location of the State Library couldn't be better. Because it's certainly, in terms of stature [...] it doesn't detract in any way from this area at all. It certainly adds to it and by having the museum and the art gallery and university right next to it, even Government House just there. You don't go in there, but it all creates a synergy and an area … it is a cultural hub and it's very important to South Australia to maintain that because it's become a feature of Adelaide and of South Australia, and no doubt Australia. It's something we can proudly show off - 'Look we've got a library, we've got a museum, we've got this and this and this'.

Alex is aware of the precinct's potential as a tourism drawcard, not so much as a driver of economic impact, but as a source of civic pride. It is 'something we can proudly show-off', symbolising a collective sense of value and significance to community which contributes to the state's identity. As new institutions develop along North Terrace develops, he also sees that civic value increasing:

> And in broader terms along North Terrace, you've got the new RAH down there and there's a few others, SAHMRI and things. That's all adding to the scope, you know, it makes me proud to be South Australian.

Alex's relationship with the State Library and the North Terrace Precinct indicates the importance of inter-connectivity between institutions and their publics when considering programming, promotional and planning opportunities. It may also illustrate a need for these relationships to be considered in broader policy decisions relating to the future of the precinct and audience development initiatives. Without acknowledgement or consideration of how the public perceive the collective civic value of the precinct, there is a risk the public may lose their sense of connection, welcome and ownership.

Alex's responses reflect Born's retentions and protentions (2015); seeing value in the cultural experience of the State Library offered today, but also what it could be in the future. When asked how important the State Library is to his life as well as the cultural life of Adelaide, his aspirational response illustrates the public belief in the value and potential of not only the State Library but of the North Terrace precinct as a singular entity:

> [I]t's something people should be proud of, as South Australians, to have that, you know? It's not 'oh, it's a library' or 'oh it's a museum' or whatever. It's a precinct that we can say 'South Australians come here to make themselves smarter. That's got to be a great thing. An education precinct, that's got to be … It's great.

Alex also recognises amongst the community the diversity of public needs and levels of interest in the library, acknowledging something I've found lacking in policy and advocacy conversations: not everyone is going to be willing or able to seek or attend arts and cultural experiences. When asked if he shares his experiences at the State Library with others, Alex describes how:

> Some people are going to appreciate it more than others. If you're talking to an avid reader about some experience you've had in the library, they're going to take away from that a lot more than somebody who, for instance, doesn't place as high a priority on learning and education. So yeah, if I go to the library, I share it around. It's not something that I go 'Oh, I'm a book nerd because I sit there and read in the library'. No, it's an important thing, and me telling other people might inspire them to come along as well.

Alex exemplifies that the greatest advocates for the State Library and all the North Terrace cultural institutions are the audiences they already serve, sharing their experiences through their networks to promote the institutions and the benefits they offer. This 'word-of-mouth' incremental form of value co-creation is manifested by their promotion of the institutions. This reputational value, fostered by the reciprocal trust and ongoing relationships between the public and State Library team members, is further evidence within this data of Holden's conception of institutional value. This is illustrated very clearly by Alex's story he would share about the State Library. Despite his

enchantment with the Mortlock, appreciation of the resources and enjoyment of the exhibitions, he:

> … can't stop singing the praises of the security guys because like I said they're not (I'm doing air quotes here for the recording) [laughter]. They're not meant to be what they are, in terms of what their actual role is. But they're very important to adding to the overall vibe of the place. I think that when the Mortlock Wing opened, and the renovations that have been done here, you know, that's great, that's really cool. I think the facilities here are world class. […] It is a State Library and it is something that we can be proud of.

Alex is also aware of the complex and precarious nature of the institution's relationship with government, alluding to the efficiency dividends all cultural institutions along North Terrace face at the time of writing. As a graduate in Finance, he identifies the economic and methodological challenges at the heart of the cultural value debates:

> I know it's difficult sometimes when you have to quantify, and I understand too, from a government perspective, sometimes it's difficult to justify their budgets towards something like this (i.e.: the library), but if you can hand them the stories and qualitatively value it, rather than quantitatively, then it starts … it just hits home how important it is to the culture of South Australia.

Alex nurtures not just a fondness but a functional and productive relationship with the State Library. He is well-positioned as a citizen to appreciate the many ways in which the State Library contributes to the reputation, identity, culture, education and economy of South Australia. Any policy decisions regarding the future of the North Terrace cultural institutions will affect him. Although he understands the economic imperatives driving policy decisions impacting on the State Library's budget. Crucially for this thesis, he also acknowledges the need to balance the quantitative data informing these decisions by including qualitative 'stories' to understand what the State Library means to the public. In many ways, he points to the need for a more balanced approach to reporting cultural value.

### 6.1.6 JAMIE – 'You get a feeling for a place by going to a place like this'

Not all patrons of the library come to research or read. Jamie was visiting from Sydney for the cricket. When asked why he chose to visit the State Library as well, he responded that it was because it was near the cricket ground. When prompted, he also said that he was visiting because 'Well, it's also […] an iconic establishment on North Terrace'.

Jamie visits galleries or State Libraries when travelling in different cities. He finds cultural institutions to be rewarding visitor experiences, providing insights into how communities see themselves:

> Oh, you learn about the history of the place or the... pride which people take with their local cultural … entities, whatever they are, be it sport or opera or whatever. You get a feeling for a place by going to a place like this very efficiently. […] clearly they preserve certain values and it's really … I mean you can go and admire a few old buildings down in Port Adelaide and it gives you the same feeling. But you get … it's much more efficient to come here and take everything that can be learnt, perhaps. Potentially, everything that can be learnt.

Jamie experiences the State Library as a cultural heritage site as well as a source of information. In his mind, the site is significant for what it represents in terms of South Australia's values and historical associations. His use of the term 'efficient' when describing the library as a means of 'getting a feeling for a place' demonstrates a preference for compendious information access or relatively quick experiences, most likely governed by his commitment to the cricket. He had time to kill but did not want to waste it. Jamie is a return visitor, counting two or three previous visits over the last 20 years. He opined that he 'can see that South Australia, actually, values a place like this because it's been well maintained or well thought through as a place to attract people'. Jamie believes that the presentation of the library reflected the manner in which it was valued by South Australians.

Jamie's assessment indicates an awareness of the teams of professionals who have invested time and expertise to maintaining the buildings and collections, as well as the State Library's instrumental function as a tourist attraction. His responses convey elements of Holden's definition of institutional value and relate to how the library represents the State to visitors, like a business card or corporate logo. Its architectural beauty, the time-efficient experiences on offer and the reliability of service combine to play a symbolic role in the promotion of the South Australian identity. From a marketing perspective, the State Library contributes to the State's "brand" values.

Jamie does not state any overt comparisons between the State Library of New South Wales and the State Library of South Australia; rather he conveys a sense of expectation, that what he is able to experience in his home state he will be able to access in others. He describes 'Our State Library on Macquarie Street, it's a major cultural centre. There's always an art exhibit or an historical exhibit. Or both'. This is another indication of the transnational theme that emerged in the survey data and earlier interviews. His response reflects the public's familiarity and comfort with the State Library as being informed by previous experiences of other libraries and their institutional purpose, trust, standards of presentation and level of service. However, Jamie is also cognisant of the evolving nature of information access and the developing roles played by library institutions within communities. When discussing the Mortlock Wing, he observes that the manner in which it is currently used may change, reflecting the changing expectations of institutions, the need to

ensure a continuity of engagement with the public and the responsibility to maximise the potential of the space:

> […] One day those books will be taken down from the shelves and something else put in its place. That wouldn't be a tragedy, because I think if it's seen as a centre of information about history and culture obviously there's the opportunity of all other aspects of human knowledge to be accessed here. As long as it's a well-resourced accessed point for all that … whether or not the books are on the shelves, it doesn't matter, in my opinion in this information age of the internet.

Jamie is interested in the developments in the field information access and technology, recognising the library's role in facilitating and promoting good online practices, particularly for young people:

> It probably gets taught in schools now, but kids need to be taught how to access the internet, certainly to be critical of what's there. It does require a lifetime of experience, I find, to be sure, you know, reasonably sure that you are […] getting the best out of it.

Although Jamie sees libraries maintaining their role as facilitators for online information practices for school children, he also values more traditional experiences and interactions. He has strong opinions about the role of libraries in communities, based on the educational or edifying potential of information and 'entertainment':

> I have internet access and a quiet place at home […] But if I go to the library it's probably to get a book or a DVD. I don't approve of libraries having DVD collections because I think it is the wrong emphasis. It's a source of entertainment. Mind, I've said that I came here to be entertained, at least mildly intellectually stimulated […] but when I see DVD sets of TV series and some of them are pretty inane, I think 'hmmm, I'd rather not see my rates going towards that'.

These sentiments echo the early colonial debates regarding the purpose and function of a public library in South Australia; what content will be offered, who should pay for it and, consequently, who will have the privilege of access.

Jamie demonstrates a depth of thought (even while occasionally contradicting himself) regarding the future of libraries, particularly the changing roles of librarians. Like Alex, he is aware of the economic challenges they face in the current political climate, joking about the extremes to which libraries may be forced to go in order to justify their government funding in quantitative terms:

> [L]ibrarians I dare say have cause to be anxious …, they probably have to justify themselves annually in terms of membership, number of borrowing card holders, number of counts of people as they enter through the door and all that sort of stuff, so relevance is obviously important. You know, they could put on strippers I suppose and boost their numbers (laughter) but obviously they won't be doing that! […] Where do you draw the line? To me,

offering DVDs is just a step too far, but for others, you know, it might be that the line is somewhere else.

By equating value with numbers through the door, Jamie sarcastically illustrates the misinterpreted authority of applying quantitative methodologies which equate numbers derived through instrumental means (strippers or DVDs) with institutional success. Strippers may well increase the numbers through the door, but do not support the goals, mission or values of the institution. His hypothesis illustrates the conundrum faced by cultural institutions, expected to justify their public funding with ever increasing numbers, in line with economic principles informing current Australian cultural policy, as previously discussed (see Chapter 2).

Jamie may have visited Adelaide as a sporting rather than cultural tourist. However, he demonstrates a familiarity of Adelaide's cultural sector as well as the State Library acquired over previous visits. His appreciation for the State Library is based on his perceptions of value derived from experiences at other State institutions. Like Alex, he was also cognisant of the reporting incongruities expected of cultural organisations when justifying public expenditure whilst maintaining their mission, values and relevance. Their responses demonstrate that members of the public have a relatively sophisticated understanding of the complexity surrounding cultural value and how it affects institutions such as the State Library. As a visitor to Adelaide and a regular user of the State Library of New South Wales, he offers significant insights regarding the role and values of the State Library within the context of the North Terrace Cultural Precinct, how they reflect the Adelaide community, South Australian values and may develop in the future. This contributes to the emerging finding regarding the interconnectedness of the North Terrace Cultural Precinct institutions in the minds of both South Australians and our visitors.

### 6.1.7   CARLO – 'Very valuable, very helpful and very meaningful for me

Carlo has been in Adelaide for two years and recently completed his Master of Education at the University of Adelaide. Originally from China, he spent several years working professionally in Italy, adopting a European name in order to ease his former colleagues' pronunciation difficulties. Carlo is an articulate interview subject, offering erudite articulations of value gained from his experiences at the State Library. He is generous with his responses and describes a complex network of values and meaning that impact on his studies, his personal relationships and sense of belonging in South Australia.

Carlo is a regular visitor to the State Library's ELIS classes, attending 'every day or every other day'. By establishing a rapport with some of the volunteer tutors who facilitate the program, Carlo has

developed a strong affinity with the institution which provides him with a sense of belonging and inclusion.

> I come here for one reason; to refine my English. So, because I know there are two volunteer programs, which one [should I attend]? One of them is the group conversation which I attended several times. The other one is the desk tutor, so I can make an appointment which is about 30 minutes long so I can have face to face conversation with the volunteers, either discussing my assignments or my writing or simply just practicing my conversation skills and I feel that that is really, really helpful.

Carlo is aware of the benefits these classes offer all international students for whom English is a second language. He is impressed by the opportunity the classes provide to students new to South Australia. The location of University of Adelaide and University of South Australia campuses along North Terrace provides their international student cohort convenient access to these classes. This proximity enables Carlo to visit the State Library between his lectures and tutorials. This suggests that these universities benefit from the free services delivered by the State Library, not only improving students' immediate outcomes, but also improving their familiarity with Australian customs and culture. Ultimately, these language classes will improve their chances of future employment. The ELIS classes are promoted through word-of-mouth amongst Adelaide's growing international student cohort. Carlo heard of these opportunities to improve his language skills though another Chinese friend who also attached a high degree of 'importance to refining his English'. Given his already proficient command of English as a second language, Carlo confessed to feeling frustrated by the limitations of the group conversation classes:

> To be honest I felt group conversation was very easy for me. […] it was very good to know that they provide these kinds of programs for international student or for anyone who doesn't speak English as their first language. So I really appreciate this, what they have arranged for us, because this is free of charge and it runs every week from Monday to Friday, so both in the morning and in the afternoon.

Carlo considers the ELIS classes are part of his responsibility as an international student, to improve his ability to converse and interact with Australians. He describes the challenges associated with the international student experiences of social and cultural isolation, which are compounded by difficulties practising their English language skills. When asked what interactions or experiences were most important, Carlo was clear that it was the opportunity to interact with the volunteers and engage in conversation with an Australian:

> The one to one conversation. Because that is exactly what I need. I really feel that it is one of the most amazing things at this library because as an international student I feel it is my responsibility to always refine my English and sometimes it is very hard for me to find a lot of opportunities to do that. If you don't really know lots of local friends […] you don't really

have the opportunities to do that. You can't simply walk on the street and stop a stranger and say 'please practise English with me' (laughter) you can't do that so you need to find a place with people who are willing to do that with me. I feel very fortunate to have finally found a place like the library. And also, because the of the location is really convenient, very centrally located and not very far from where I live.

The social interaction with volunteers at the State Library provides Carlo with an avenue through which he can access more than information and language classes; the experience he describes is akin to a cultural introduction, an open forum where he may learn behaviours and social mores to ease his passage into the Adelaide community, and improve his employment prospects. This is demonstrated when I ask him to nominate the best experience he has had at the State Library:

> Yes, after several weeks of attending the conversation classes, I feel that I've already established a kind of connection with some volunteers that I talk with very frequently. They share part of my life, I feel, because you know I was applying for the university so I need some suggestions, some advice, some information or just some perspective from some local people about the university I will potentially go to or the degree I will do […] It's not just about the language classes. I know I now feel that kind of personal connection, also the emotion […] because all of them are all very well qualified people. They are. A lot of them were teachers when they were young, so that is the reason why I feel that the advice from them is very valuable, very helpful and very meaningful for me.

The interactions between the public and the service delivery teams have an impact beyond their official roles or purpose; the phenomenological engagement they facilitate at the State Library assists newcomers such as Carlo, Sophia and Michelle with their transition into the Adelaide community and culture. Carlo's trust and level of dependence on the volunteers suggests that the free language classes contribute to the cultural value of the State Library as well as to the creation of the social capital of Adelaide. Carlo describes how he can always visit the library and 'have a chat with them' if he has some 'difficulties in doing anything, or if there is something very confusing'. He shared the following example which demonstrates not only his depth of thought concerning Australian cultural practices, but also the breadth of advice gained from the library though the conversation classes:

> Yesterday I talked about the way people celebrate Christmas here, because this is about a cultural issue. We have Spring Festival in China this is the occasion on which there is a family reunion and I have heard that people celebrate Christmas also by family reunion here […] I didn't really know that it's appropriate to join one of my local friends at the family celebrations of this festive season, because we […] in China, if you try to celebrate Spring Festival with friend, sometimes it is not culturally very appropriate because that is the occasion we, it is exclusively for family reunion […] it is not a perfect time for people to chare with their friends. That is the reason I was not sure because I received an invitation from one of my friends here to say he is very willing to share part of his Christmas holiday with me, but I didn't really know if it was culturally appropriate […] because sometimes it can be just out of kindness or out of politeness, so I do not really know if he really means that. (HR: If there is someone new in town or their family has moved away or something, they get included so

they don't spend Christmas alone) I just wanted to confirm this, so I came here and I asked one of the volunteers there and they said exactly what you said.

Several interview subjects, such as Carlo and Maria acknowledged that the advice provided by the State Library regarding local customs and engaging with community contributed to their sense of welcome and confidence. Their experience of the State Library creates a positive impression of the city generally but, critically for this case study, these value perceptions illustrate the institutional role played by the State Library in building trust, community identity and social cohesion. Although there may be other avenues available for such advice, these interviews suggest that some new arrivals to Adelaide recognise the additional value and benefits afforded by the State Library. These opportunities, delivered under the guidance of local, personalised and trusted expertise, support international students in their transition from diverse social and cultural backgrounds to believing they are a welcome part of South Australia. This interpersonal exchange has a direct impact on the quality of Carlo's experience and life in Adelaide. This represents an extension of the traditional role of the State Library beyond that of information provision, to an active agent in the creation and reinforcement of social cohesion:

It's not just about conversation, they are helping you with very valuable advice and information […] On culture and local life … everything! […] I feel very relaxed and also very secure because now I know very clearly that whenever I have a problem I can come here (laughter).

Impressed by the quality and helpfulness of the library's services, Carlo has become an advocate for the State Library amongst his peers. However, like Alex, he also acknowledges that the experience is not for everyone:

I also recommend this library for some of my classmates so some of them came here. [However] every person is in different circumstances so I can't expect all people to do the same, simply because I like coming here. But I do try my best to recommend this place to other people.

Carlo's voluntary promotion of the State Library reflects the value he perceives in the services he has accessed free of charge, not only exemplifies the major value theme of Civic Trust and Public Service, but also underpins the neo-institutional value of the State Library. Carlo's own voluntary service at the Adelaide Airport adds value to his appreciation and respect for the volunteers at the State Library. In his volunteer role he is 'very happy to see people doing the same thing. Always strangers helping strangers, I really appreciate that'.

Carlo's English language skills had enabled him to complete a Master's degree at University of Adelaide. However, he intends to pursue further post-graduate study and become a teacher. He

intends to maintain his connection with the library through the conversation classes to meet the high level of language skills this next career step requires:

> My next degree I will probably do at Flinders […] in terms of language ability, it will be very demanding because in order to be a teacher you need to have good language skills so that is the reason why I will continue coming here.

Like Alex, Carlo's potential future role as a teacher will continue to embed the benefits of his experiences at the State Library within the community, judging by his current advocacy of the services to his fellow international students. When asked about what story or anecdote about the library he would share, he suggests the value of the conversation classes, contextualised within the physical location of the State Library. His response brings into focus the value he co-creates through his interactions with the volunteers as well as his own subjective appreciation of the collective experience on site:

> I want to mention, it is very important, the environment here is excellent. The vibes are excellent for reading, for doing some reading. Sometimes you know I always bring a book here because […] when I am waiting here for my time slot, I just do some reading. I cannot do a lot of reading at home because I am sleeping probably or (laughter) doing something else which is completely irrelevant to my studies. Whereas here I feel that everybody around me is doing the same thing, so it is easier for me to focus on my reading or my other things… Yes, very good environment plus very nice people, nice and helpful people. It is a perfect combination.

Carlo gains 'security', 'confidence', 'advice' and 'focus' from his time at the library which all benefit his studies and his main purpose for living in Adelaide. However, his responses also indicate a high level of value placed on both his direct interactions with other people and the opportunity to share a space, serving more intrinsic social needs for connection, cultural exchange and common purpose. Carlo's level of dependence on and trust shown in the State Library is commensurate with how he gives back to the community, as a volunteer and an advocate for the institution. The State Library has helped him form friendships and find a place where he, and others like him, will be welcomed, supported and eventually feel they may belong.

### 6.1.8   KATE AND GRANT - 'The heart of everything that goes on'

Kate and Grant are work colleagues from Flinders University visiting the State Library for a meeting. The State Library Café provides a convenient venue to meet with other colleagues from the SA Museum. According to Kate the cafe:

> […] sits between the museum, gallery and science centre and it's generally free of screaming children and loud tourists. It's a more professional space and a bit more respectful in a way, I think. You can actually have formal meetings without disruption.

Kate works part time at the SA Museum Science Centre and is completing a PhD at Flinders University. She regularly visits the library café because 'people leave the place tidy'. She believes this indicates a relationship between the State Library and the public which is more respectful than with 'a lot of other public spaces'. Grant agrees, perceiving the quiet atmosphere at the State Library as more conducive than other public spaces in Adelaide for a meeting:

> You know, just the fact that it's a library really does draw a different mentality from the crowd. Everybody knows that you've got to be quiet in the library and that it's a space to think. Whereas the museum café is 'bring your family along – we're here for ice-cream and drink'. It's a whole different environment.

Kate and Grant value the library's location within the North Terrace Precinct. They are also aware of distinct public preferences for each institution, depending on varied needs or purposes at different times. Their observations about expectations of behavioural requirements between institutions also illustrates how the public plays an active role in co-creating the library experience; through a tacit knowledge of the need to be quiet and respectful of other members of the public. Kate explains that 'it's not necessarily an anti-fun tone or anything like that. It's just a different space. But it's still flexible. I've attended events here that have been very much fun spaces and different vibe altogether'.

As evident in the survey data, Kate's comments demonstrate how the State Library offers a range of experiences and special events that may appeal to the public at varying stages of their lives. When asked to describe their best experiences at the State Library, Grant admits that he rarely, if ever, visits the State Library with the intention 'to use it as a library'. As an employee at Flinders University, he uses the university library and Google Scholar to access information, rather than travelling into the city to use the State Library. However, he was aware of the opportunities it afforded his family:

> I've never had to come in here to find a book, which is odd. But we did come through for the Dream Big Festival that they had earlier this year […] North Terrace was all lit up with activities for kids and the library had opened its door and had a few little … they had an art project going on and […] they had a little toy exhibition at the library and that was really nice, just to walk through the library. You're not here for any research or other purpose. It was off the cuff. It's like 'Oh yeah, the library's here, it's good'. You know, we didn't stop and do anything here, but it was nice to go 'oh yeah, the library's here. We must come back one day and have a good look around.

Grant appreciates the potential offered by the library and recognises the latent value it represents as part of the cultural infrastructure of the city, even though he does not use it himself. However, he is 'really happy that there is a State Library here' and if he 'lived closer to the library then I'd be

here more often'. Grant's description echoes the research of Saxena and McDougal who found that:

> While non-users do not experience the benefits enjoyed by library users, … non-users receive significant benefits from public library services and often value them as much as users. Elements of this value stem from the option, existence and legacy values that public libraries confer. Although an individual may not use or ever visit a library, the knowledge that it will be indefinitely accessible creates what is known as 'option value' (2012, p. 368).

Kate also does not use the collections of the State Library and suggests that her best experience of the institution took place at an exhibition at the Flinders City Gallery:[36]

> It was a taxidermy art installation kind of thing and they had Joe Baine from the museum come out and explain how he got into it and what being a taxidermist involves […] They drew a small crowd but everyone who was there was really interested in the subject and we got to ask really good questions and it was a very sort of intimate space. Really cool use of the facilities. I hadn't really known that that gallery was there, so it was a really cool way to sort of be introduced to it.

Kate's experience reflects the opportunities the State Library's location on North Terrace presents for cross-institutional collaborations. The State Library not only has the potential to share staff resources and expertise, but as shown by Kate's participation, is able to attract members of the public (non-library users) who may not have known such events and exhibition spaces were available at the library. This data indicates the potential audience development benefits of collaboration between or across the North Terrace cultural institutions, sharing resources as well as their audiences. This is relevant to current discussions regarding the Lot Fourteen site. Based on the Old Royal Adelaide Hospital site on the eastern of North Terrace, Lot Fourteen is the home of the new Australian Space Agency, a data project from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and University of Adelaide. According to Russell, the precinct of already home to 'a number of start-up and medium-sized companies on site as it attracts firms working in its strategic themes of space, defence, cyber security and creative arts technology' (2019). Russell describes that through Lot Fourteen, the State Government is partnering with a range of local and international universities and commercial interests (2019). This promises to reinvigorate the South Australian economy through, amongst other initiatives, the collection of data. This data will 'inform decision

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[36] The Flinders City Gallery was an exhibition space within the State Library building leased by Flinders University to showcase the extensive teaching collections of art objects belonging to the University. The gallery was located within the State Library from 2003 and 2018. Kate's response here demonstrates a similar association evident in the survey data, whereby visitors to the site do not distinguish between the State Library and other organisations occupying the site, such as the Adelaide Lending Library or, in this instance, Flinders City Gallery. In the minds of the public, they are all a State Library experience.

making for government projects, industry projects and future prosperity. It will improve productivity and, most importantly, create more jobs right here in SA'. Another proposal put forward by the State Government is for the development of a new Gallery of Indigenous Art and Culture, drawing on the collections of the State Library, SA Museum and Art Gallery of South Australia. Richards suggests that the viability of this project remains unclear, although money for a scoping study was included in the 2019-2020 state budget (2019). Given the value placed upon the North Terrace Cultural Precinct by many survey and interview respondents, and their perception of community identity tied to the area, there is a significant level of public interest in the outcome of these developments.

Kate describes how the primary beneficiary from collaborations between institutions is the public. This was evident during a space industry conference held in 2018 in Adelaide:

> I work in the Discovery Centre for the museum and when we had the Planet Conference on, the space exploration conference, people would come up to me and ask, 'what space themed activities do we have on in Adelaide?' And I'd say, actually, the whole cultural precinct has got the space theme, so I did actually tell them about what was going on in the library and we had the fliers and I explained 'you start at this end and you work your way through'. I have told people about what's going on here and what I've seen.

The willingness of team members across the precinct to cross-promote the events of other institutions builds on the public's trust in all institutions. This aligns with Holden's descriptions of institutional value, underpinning the public's perception of and their relationship with government, as presented in section 5.9 of this thesis. The consolidation of public trust was also seen in Jamie's description of the standards and expectations of the library as a State Library. As an act of information transfer granted from one institution to another, it also contradicts economic philosophy regarding competition between institutions in Chapter 2. As shown by Grant and Kate, the public's point of entry to the State Library may be through another institution, but the experience builds familiarity with its potential. This informs an intention to visit when they have the need or 'the family time'. Grant elaborates when asked how important the library is to him and to Adelaide, demonstrating an awareness of its symbolic value as a component of the North Terrace Cultural Precinct:

> Culturally for Adelaide, I think it's really important. I look at the library, the museum and the art gallery as a [...] (Laughter) It's a triumvirate! There's the three of them, the three points of education and its fantastic that they're right next to each other and they're easy to find. So, I imagine there is a lot of local history locked away in this place where... stuff that people wouldn't imagine was here until they had a very specific question [...] people have actually found information on the property they own, so they can go back and find old land hold texts and documents and who used to live in this old cottage [...] Very personal journeys, you

know? I don't think you would just walk in here and go 'I want to learn something about Adelaide'. You need a really specific question to chase up and I just take it for granted that that sort of thing is kept here safe.

Even as a non-user, Grant is not only aware of the extent of the State Library's historical collections and their latent potential; his response indicates that he trusts State Library to take care of them. He assumes that the information he (and others) may one day be interested in will be available, when 'they had a very specific question'. He values the continuity of the library's role preserving and providing access to South Australian cultural heritage on behalf of the public until their interest or need arises. Grant is illustrating the option value associated with the State Library. Henry describes option value as 'a willingness to pay for retaining an option to use an area or facility that would be difficult or impossible to replace and for which no close substitute is available' (1974, p. 89). Such an unknowable potential future demand constitutes an option for Grant, one he values highly.

The importance of the collections' continuity for Grant may reflect his professional associations with scientific collections at both Flinders University and the SA Museum. Kate also reiterates the importance of local and family history preservation and the option value present within the State Library collections and services:

> I've got a family history in South Australia and more so my partner had a rural family history in South Australia and they've had family property and those kinds of things [...] you take it for granted that all that information is always going to be there and most of it isn't digitised and that's where the internet fails (laughter) and you need to have a physical library to store this stuff.

The physical integrity and access of the documentary materials is important to Kate. However, she also values the location of where the collections are housed and made accessible at the State Library.

> The cultural precinct we have here along North Terrace is unlike any other capital city in Australia. The fact that we have the library, the museum and the art gallery all in one row... There're so many events that are run in collaboration and it's all synchronised. Like the Dream Big festival was a good one. The space exploration was a good one. Fringe, same deal and it's awesome and if any one of those institutions for whatever reason was valued less and it wouldn't work as well and there'd be this sort of disconnect if one of them was moved somewhere else or something like that. That's really important.

Her response mirrors several survey responses categorised under the major theme of Community Resource & Site Value, whereby their experience of coming into the library is enhanced by its location within the North Terrace Cultural Precinct. Kate's experience working with the public in the South Australian Museum informs her insights into the collection management challenges

faced by cultural institutions in need of storage. Grant and Kate also appreciate the role and limitations of digitisation programs as well as the irreplaceability of original physical artefacts – their intrinsic and historical worth. When the conversation reflexively turned to online accessibility, the subjects talk over each other. Kate asserted the intrinsic value of objects and the scale of requirements necessary to digitise South Australia's cultural collections:

> You'll never catch up, it's never going to catch up, it's never going to get the backlog, and the museum's in exactly the same way, in terms of how they catalogue everything … The work is never done, and likewise the material will always have value. It's never going to lose value. You're never going to say 'no-one' is ever going to want to know about this person because all their living relatives are dead. Someone is going to want to know about that person and that person's history.

The subjects' level of trust in the expertise and storage capacity of the library demonstrates the co-creative nature of the collections' latent value – the State collections are of value not just for those seeking access them today, online or in person, but also for those who will be accessing them in the future. The collections' latent value is realised when the enquiry is made, the item retrieved and the potential it represents activated through the interaction with an unknown member of the public, at an unknown point in time. As a member of the Laboratory Adelaide Project, I produced a case study of such latent long-term value activation. The State Library held for over a century a collection of archival documents from the Red Cross. These documents were transformed. They had travelled only a stone's throw from where they were originally compiled, (in the Verco Buildings on North Terrace, diagonally opposite the State Library), but had been ferried through time as part of the collection. It was 100 years before their latent value was realised as part of the commemorations of the ANZAC Centenary. They were transformed and reinterpreted using digital technologies. Publishing them online connected them to similar archives around the world, creating a universal story of war, loss and love through the eyes of South Australians (Meyrick et al, 2018, p. 76). This localisation of international experiences through the collections is reflected in Grant's description of the State Library's functional role as 'a cultural anchor'. Kate also perceives the past and future utility of the matchless collections to inform new works, resonating with the survey responses alluding to their retentions and protentions. She recognises their potential to create new knowledge and drive its communication through the community:

> Even if you yourself don't want to do the research, a lot of people have interests in things. Like historical fiction. I'm a huge Colin Thiele fan so there's books like *Fire and Stone* which is the story of Cooper Pedy. There's [sic] books like … the story of the Barossa and the role the German settlement had on South Australia, and all of the facts that he got to write that book

would have come from the State Library. The families that set up the Barossa, how they would have got there, how they would have divided up their land, how big the settlements were at those time periods. That actually came from here and there's no other way you're going to find that out. People don't keep personal records like that.

Although they perceive a range of benefits provided by the State Library for the community, Kate and Grant also believe that the library is underutilised and that many in Adelaide are not aware of its presence on North Terrace.

> They've never had to come here and use it for anything, that it's had absolutely no impact on their life whatsoever. They can't even imagine the site where the building is, let alone the actual face of the library itself […] I find it fascinating, they could just barely remember the museum, because they were there once at school, but the rest of it is invisible. So, this is sort of one of the best kept secrets in the State for the people who live here. It's really underutilised, I think, and unrecognised.

When asked for one story or anecdote she would share about the State Library, Kate describes the documentary collections and how people will be able to access that in future. She also raises what she considers to be the responsibility of the public to support the library, to reinforce its identity and relevance within the community over time:

> I think the one thing that people need to appreciate is that the information is always going to be here, but as members of the State or even just the town of Adelaide, they really should be a little bit more active in their interest. […]I don't know a lot of people who knew that it was here. They know the string of buildings that look like old buildings, but no-one really distinguishes between where the museum ends, and the library begins. It's the same for the art gallery […] it all blurs into one. But that's a pro and a con of having a cultural precinct – it flows, and perhaps a bit too well (laughter).

Informed by her experience facilitating public enquiries at the SA Museum, Kate suggests that the public may not actually know which institutions constitute the North Terrace Cultural Precinct, unless they are regular visitors to one or all of them. Her statement contrasts with Jamie, visiting from Sydney, who was well aware of 'the iconic' status of the State Library, the prestigious location upon North Terrace. In his view, this implied that the people of Adelaide value their cultural institutions. However, according to Kate and Grant, the local community seem to be unaware of the cultural riches on their doorstep. Kate suggests the responsibility for this divergence of value recognition lies with the public, as though they are neglecting their civic responsibilities for their own public spaces and institutions. As voters and taxpayers, members of the community are expected to have a vested and active interest in the policy leadership shown by government in the stewardship and maintenance of State institutions and the collections in their care. If the voters and taxpayers do not hold policy makers to account regarding the maintenance and development of cultural institutions, it is unlikely they will be considered a policy

priority. The legacy hard won by previous generations who lobbied and paid for the establishment of cultural institutions, as donors or taxpayers, could be lost. Kate's observations link back to the creation of universal education and literacy standards that drove the advent of public institutions at the time of the state's founding. As addressed in previous chapters, a functional democracy depends on an informed public. However, as observed by Grant and Carlo, neither the library – nor their companion cultural institutions – are for everyone all the time.

Grant describes how he would be more likely to turn to his local library for a book. However, if he had serious research, he again demonstrates the option value and recognised expertise of the State Library, declaring he would 'home in and come to the Motherlode, straight away':

> It stands taller. It's a bit more grown up and serious than the other libraries. You know, the other libraries, you've got your kids there, you've got some readers, grab a novel. That sort of stuff. But this one, it does seem, it suits the combination with the museum, really well. This is an archive, it's not somewhere for people to just pour through at random.

Grant reflects a similar response to Sophia's in appreciating the atmosphere of the State Library, as more conducive to serious research or focussed study. Critical are the visitor support teams, without whom, he observes, 'you'd have no idea which way to turn. You'd need people to steer you in the right direction. It wouldn't function without them'. Kate appreciates the public library network that originated in the Institute Building in the late nineteenth century:

> The State Library is effectively the same as the Science Centre. It's where all the important stuff is and while the museum has a gallery out the front, all of South Australia is filled with tiny town libraries, and it's the same thing. It's all part of the same thing, all part of the information repository in some way.

The cultural precinct and individual institutions matter a great deal to many of our survey respondents. They play an integral role in personal and social identity formation and they community's intellectual development. Through their detailed interview, Grant and Kate exemplify the option value of the State Library, describing how the value they perceive relates to a potential or future use, rather than as an immediate resource. The State Library plays a critical role in the preservation and accessibility of South Australia's cultural heritage, recognised by Kate and Grant as a custodian and trusted institution that impacts on the creative and academic sectors across the State. Informed and experienced advocates like Kate and Grant may not be making use of the research or archive collections themselves. However, they possess a deep appreciation of the latent value of the State Library's collections, its foundational connection to the history of South Australia and the vocational contribution of its current stewards. Although they currently have no

call to access more than table space in the café for their meetings at this time in their lives, they treasure the richness of opportunity presented by the collections and believe it is the responsibility of all South Australians to take an interest.

### 6.1.9   EDWARD – 'For me is being part of Australian or international culture'

Edward had recently arrived in Australia from Iran. Like several of our interview subjects, he was ostensibly using the Library for instrumental gains: as a gateway to future employment and to improve his English language skills. However, the services the library offers had far deeper and transformative effects of great value for a new arrival, connecting him to both Australian and international culture and community.

> I'm there to improve my language skills because I am looking for a job and want to stay here and this is very useful to me. I want to attend at all available class and program like this, along with this convenient environment to reading and surfing web because there is internet access and table and desk, everything is set up to do something like this and is very useful for me.

Edward visits the library every day for the group conversation classes and to access material related to his professional background, Information and Technology. However, when asked what is important to him on these visits, his response prioritised the personal interactions he experienced:

> Oh, first of all, lovely person, lovely staff is very helpful and are very interest to help people and everybody who come here [sic]. After that I love this library because I can find […] my professionally related books'.

Edward did not share his visa status as Sophia had, but his determination to enter the workforce and improve his English skills indicate an aspiration to become an active citizen contributing to the South Australian community. The State Library provides the tools and advice to help him achieve this. His appreciation was evident, particularly when contrasted with his experience of libraries and information access in Iran:

> I can find a lot of books and lectures about my profession and very interest[ing] things, […] everything is free to use. Because in our country you should pay partially or monthly to use the library. Internet access is very low or limited. Everything is free and useful … yes.

Free and open access to the State Library is something that many of our international respondents noted as being of value. This highlights the subjectivity of option value to which Grant alluded. This option value would vary depending on the public's background and experience. For Edward this renders the even more State Library valuable: not only had he no experience of a free and

open library access in Iran, but that value increases given the support and guidance it provides at this challenging time in his life.

Edward is self-conscious of his English language skills. He has written over fifty job applications and made numerous revisions to his resume. The web access at the library allowed him to research resume formats appropriate for the Australian job market and found they were very different to what he had previously experienced.

> After that I found out [the] root cause about what's happened. I found resume type and format and content is very different in Australia. After that I found content is very important along with Aussie-type of wording.

Edward discussed in detail some of the linguistic challenges associated with the differences between formal English and the Australian vernacular. He suggested that 'Australian' was influenced by the auto-correct and US dictionary linked to Microsoft Word software he used. He used the peer-to-peer conversation classes at the State Library to navigate these challenges, describing his experience as 'one of the lovely things here is peer-to-peer person who helped me to review and correct my resume and cover letter. Very lovely and helpful. Is very important to me'.

With the support of the volunteers, Edward can both navigate the practical issues of formatting and wording, and engage with the more didactic elements of English language instruction. This became clear when I asked him about the impact of this guidance on how confident he felt about his job prospects and potential future in Australia. He had already gained a greater understanding about the nature of the employment markets in Australia. Through connections made at the State Library, Edward also obtained the means to address his frustration and confusion about his lack of success:

> Before I come here, I think of Australia, as a developed country, […] has job vacancies in my field. […] I very confident [sic] with my experience and my history but after I arrive here and searching for job, I feel it's a bit tricky and you should have the very strong and wide network of people and professional person to help find a job. Maybe it's a main part of job searching, is the network here'.

Edward is taking a very proactive problem-solving approach to job hunting. The State Library plays a critical role, by providing opportunities to improve his language skills and the local knowledge required to break into his industry. Edward is facing the challenge of navigating employment pathways. Engaging with the State Library provides direction and practical guidance during a destabilising liminal point in his life. The State Library is a site of personal and professional

transition for many of our interview subjects and survey respondents. The institution offers them a personally supportive and pragmatic entry point through which to connect to their potential futures. However, it also offers the opportunity to reconnect with the past. When I asked whether he shared his experiences at the library with others, he provided an illustrative example of how the library provided opportunities for social engagement and community service:

> I suggest to my […] friends who have lived here for more than seven years and never come here at all. I suggest to bring their childs [sic] to play with the useful things, because I play with the Lego parts when I was a child and it's very … Sometimes I go there and play, it seems a little (nervous laughter) […] Is very lovely to make something with Lego parts […] life … is different. Some things are very different … I sad [sic] because I can't bring with myself my Lego (laughter) My Lego. I left behind this for my, you know … […] I love this area[37] because childrens [sic] play with everything creative and it's very … and this much I share with my friends, and my friends and my neighbour and they come here and use for everything.

Like Michelle and Sophia, Edward experiences a phenomenological engagement with his past, to a time in his life where he was not confronting the challenges to his confidence and lifestyle, where he could do something literally and tangibly constructive to assist his current transformation. Edward activates memories of his childhood and recent past through playing with Lego at the State Library. This overcomes his loneliness by reconnecting him through imaginative links to friends and family in Iran, whoever may now be the custodians of his Lego. Edward's attachment to Lego is more than a means of engaging with his past. Recent research from Castledine and Chalmers suggests that playing with Lego assists with problem solving and reflection, fostering a transference of intellectual problem-solving capabilities into the 'real world' (2011, p. 1). The Lego may have been placed in The Hub to occupy children like Sophia's sons. However, it also holds unforeseeable appeal for adults such as Edward, undergoing a personal transition and looking to connect with a new way of life and people within his new community. Edward visits the State Library in order to address the challenges associated with his moving to a new country, constructing a new life for himself, one Lego block at a time. This became clearer when I asked how important the library is to his life and the cultural life of Adelaide:

> It's very important for me. First of all, because of programs and facilities are here. But important things for me is [sic] being part of Australian or international culture. […] I can make conversation with people who are natively Australian or come from another country and they share their experience and for living together. Is very important for is I think, it's

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[37] Indicating The Hub space beyond the room in which the interview was conducted.

> very valuable part of my life to be here and to use these facilities […] It's growing my network
> too and it could be useful, very useful to find a job.

The faith Edward places in the State Library exemplifies the reciprocal nature of the major value theme Civic Trust and Public Service – the public place their trust in the integrity and expertise of institution to deliver service to members of the public. His experiences reflect the institution's original associations with mutual improvement and autodidacticism. These educational movements were supported by access to knowledge and information to ensure an informed electorate, as described in Chapter 4.

It is beyond the scope of this project to confirm whether Edward gained employment in his chosen field and was able to stay in Australia. However, like Carlo, his understanding of Australia gained through the State Library has been reciprocated, by his elucidation of aspects of life in Iran for his fellow participants, exemplifying the themes of Social/cultural Connection and Exchange. His contribution highlights key political, social and cultural differences, such as limitations placed on access to library and information services. He also demonstrates the intimate and subjective support the library provides new arrivals, such as access to familiar objects like Lego and overcoming frustrations with Microsoft Word. When I asked Edward to describe what he would share with others about the State Library, his sense of enchantment and connection with the site was obvious. He offered a response that describes the amalgamation of tangible physical sensations with intrinsic personal resonances that inform how many of our interview subjects and survey respondents experience the State Library:

> The old-fashioned library is very, very interesting for me because [it's] about civilization or
> architecture […] I never seen before library like this (HR: the Mortlock Wing?) Yes, full of
> books, very old books in different size, books like this, you know? [38] And I'm 'what is it?'
> because I want to touch it (laughter) and everywhere atmosphere is very interesting for me.
> Is the snapshot that I come here for first time, and it's very wonderful for me'.

The temporal and geographic ambiguity of Edward's experiences at the State Library connect him to the history and heritage of Adelaide as well as reinforcing his personal identity and resilience to confront the challenges of settling in a new country. This is not dissimilar to the South Australian Association's rationale in 1836 for establishing a library in their proposed new colony. Much of what Edward gains from his interactions is intangible. However, the latent potential which the State Library is helping him activate may have measurable instrumental benefits for himself, his

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[38] Indicating the size of large format bound folios and publications with outstretched hands.

community and South Australia, at some time in future. But at this liminal moment in his life, the State Library's support is personally invaluable.

### 6.1.10 JOHN – 'You can just have some peace and quiet'

John was one of the older interview subjects. From our preliminary conversation, he gave the impression that he was homeless. His interview was brief, yet provided strong indications of how this group of visitors to the library engage with various services and the role it plays in their lives.

John answered my questions directly but was reluctant to be drawn into further conversation. When I asked why he came to the library, he replied that he was 'already in town. I had lunch at the uni and I have a barbeque to go to this afternoon'. John visited the library 'pretty much every day' and came mostly for the free WIFI. His first memory of visiting a library was as a child, with his 'mother dragging me around and her getting lots of books'. John insisted that as a child the books were not for him, indicating a sense of exclusion or disinterest associated with his parent's use of the library. There is no sense of this first memory being an enjoyable experience, though it does indicate a degree of familiarity, if not fondness. It is perhaps a sign of a new awareness of the library's potential that he visits the site of childhood displeasure each day.

John's taciturn nature made him a challenging interview subject. However, he was almost vehement when asked what kinds of experiences and interactions at the State Library were important to him. For John, the State Library is:

> 'Somewhere safe, where if it's too hot you can come in or if it's too cold you can come in, and you can just have some peace and quiet to do some reading or whatever'.

John also values the library site for opportunities to read. He clearly values his time there and may not have regular access to reading materials beyond the institution. Most telling is his appreciation of the physical shelter from extreme weather and personal safety the site affords. In 2016 there were over 6,200 people classified as homeless in South Australia.[39] Over three quarters of these people were men in boarding houses or shelters, with men representing two thirds of people sleeping rough or taking shelter in improvised dwellings.[40] The State Library offers everyone safety

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[39] According the Australian Bureau of Statistics Census of Population and Housing, table 1.1
http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/2049.02016?OpenDocument

[40] https://www.homelessnessaustralia.org.au/sites/homelessnessaus/files/2017-07/Homelessness%20and%20men.pdf

and shelter during the day, as well as a positive or at least harmless means of occupying themselves. As John suggested, this may include reading books or using the WIFI and free internet. John did not share what he was using the State Library's IT infrastructure for. His response – prioritising safety and shelter – focusses on his immediate physical and psychological needs. This focus amplifies the value of basic human services are for some members of the public and is associated with the major theme of Community Resource & Site Value. His response also illustrates the variable subjectivity of option value – what some members of the public take may for granted, like shelter from Adelaide's sweltering heat, is of a higher value to someone with nowhere else to go.

John also has more recent positive memories of social interaction and connection in the State Library. When I asked about the best experience he'd enjoyed at the library, he described how 'Some girl I had met ages ago came up to me while I was on the computer and she remembered me though I didn't remember her, and she invited me to go play ping pong'.

One of the visitor services team at the State Library told me that John was one of a group who regularly use the State Library together, and that they rarely visit alone. When I asked if he shared his experiences at the library with others, however, John returned to his earlier brevity, insisting that 'no, it's just a personal time for me'. He was shy, appearing conflicted between a willingness to participate and reluctance to give too much away about himself and his companions. This is demonstrated when I asked how important the library was to him and the cultural life of Adelaide:

> I mean for me it's very important that I come here every day, otherwise I don't know what I would do. It seems for the cultural life of Adelaide, I don't know about the culture, but it seems important for Adelaide that lots of people come here. I mean I see other people here every day.

John may visit the State Library every day for peace and quiet, but he is also aware of familiar faces amongst the public seeking shelter and a safe environment on a daily basis, be they students, researchers or others constituting the diverse State Library public. This disparate random community of strangers offers the opportunity for some interview subjects to interact and engage with each other. However, John values the security, peace and quiet above the chance to

socialise. Meeting John validated my broad sampling approach to the interviews – his experiences show the diverse range of motivations and needs drawing people to the State Library.

The story about the library that John would share with others indicates an inspiring and potentially transformational dimension to his visits. He was reluctant to provide anything too revelatory or personally detailed. However, John would tell people about an object on display in the Mortlock Wing, connecting his experience of the building to a vestigial association with the SA Museum:

> I went on a tour here and […] you can get really good photos and there was an eagle (HR: Oh that's right, it's in the case isn't it?) Yeah'.

There was nothing more he was prepared to share. By way of thanks, I gave him an additional coffee voucher. He'd asked for another, for his friend.

### 6.1.11 JOSEPH – 'We all know each other, and we know a different culture'

While some international university students came primarily for the language classes, Joseph was at the library for the peace and quiet that allowed him to focus on his research:

> So today I come in just to search my medical articles, to complete my research at university. […] this place is very quiet, I think, and it's given me a good room to search. I am liking this place.

Joseph is from Saudi Arabia and studying a medical science degree at the University of South Australia (UniSA). He has lived in Adelaide for one year. The experiences and interactions that are important to him revolve around the range of available resources and the people who facilitate his access to them:

> The most important thing is when I just find easy way to find these books upstairs, when I want to search article and all the staff here are very kindly and friendly, where they are dealing with us. Sometimes we had meeting here with other people. Sometimes with students, my university, sometime from the community, people coming here from the community. Sometimes they have I think different discussion upstairs.

This library as a neutral public meeting space is an important factor in how people value the State Library. Joseph shares his experiences as part of the ELIS program, describing the sense of community that has developed amongst participants. However, when I asked about his best experience of the library, he focussed on access to resources, implying that he values the interpersonal social interactions with library staff:

> The best experience I'd say is get easy access to information here, so this library helped me to find articles in easy way. When I ask something of staff about a specific book, they help

me and can find it and after that I just sat to research. It's easy to get information, than [sic] to stay in my home.

Unlike other students using the spaces, Joseph does not mention the free WIFI or the internet. This may imply that he has online access to digital library resources as a student of the University of South Australia. However, his response indicates that the State Library provides more than the information services he could access from home. The State Library's physical books and the search support provided by the State Library teams represent an additional benefit not found through the university. It is one he shares with his friends:

> I invite my friend here, in this library, [to] show him how I get to […] research articles. And sometimes we came [sic] here to have a discussion and we find this place is good place for have our discussion […] we see other people, they start to talk and start discussion and some people they start to look at the laptop, search something. Yes, it's made me feel better than home.

Joseph's experience exemplifies the benefits of social interaction available at the State Library experience. Members of the public, including new arrivals, become part of the community through engaging the library staff. There is a behavioural element evident in his response. Joseph describes how he is careful to judge whether or not it is appropriate to engage with other members of the public to start a conversation or search something together on their laptops. As he greatly values the quiet space and focus provided by the library, he understands how others may as well. However, he also acknowledges that this focus does not preclude the possibility that others may also wish to engage in 'discussion' which makes coming to the State Library 'better than home'. This exemplifies the role of the institution in encouraging appropriate behaviours, illustrating one of the key elements of Holden's institutional value (2006). Joseph's level of empathy for other users and their potential research needs reflects his own, demonstrating the co-creative nature of the library experience and the public's custodial role in its preservation.

When I asked how important the library was to his life and that of the community, Joseph nominated the social and educational elements of his experiences at the State Library. He finds these more preferable than the resources available to him as a student at UniSA:

> In [the] past you have difficulty if you want some information, to get at specially, if you start to research or write an assignment at university, so it was difficult to access or get some information. […] but these days library make it easy for all the people to access any information they want. Also, I like the English class discussion here. […] we all know each other, and we know a different culture and that makes sense for each person to get to know anything he wants.

Joseph demonstrates the reciprocal nature of the cross-cultural transformational exchange and their benefits that were also identified by the survey respondents and interview subjects such as Carlo, Edward, Michelle, Pamela and Maria. Finding themselves isolated and dislocated for study or other purposes, perhaps like Carlo carrying a responsibility to learn the English language, new arrivals to Adelaide come to the library as the first step towards creating a new home. They gain the reassurance from the sense of connection to the community and empathy with others in similar circumstances.

When I asked for the story about the State Library he would share with others, Joseph's response reflects the complex network of value manifestations common amongst all respondents. He also expresses his gratitude and sense of enchantment with all the institution offers:

> I will tell maybe that this place may be the one, the best place in Adelaide. I visit here because it give me […] a good way to relax, that [is] far from stress or from the home, something like that. […] also they give available resources here so we can find easy way, so, I like this library.

Joseph's positive impression of the State Library has the potential to influence more of his friends, family and community when he returns to Saudi Arabia. The institutional value and the democratic values and behaviours elicited by the State Library underpin his experience of open social connection, knowledge and cultural exchange. This informs his image of Australia. Joseph had no previous experience of access to a free library service:

> I hope that … in my country, open like this library, especially in my city because we don't have like this library accessible [sic]. (HR: What sort of libraries do you have in Saudi?) It's like private libraries, not like public, you know? So you have to become a member, you have to pay that and you know, not all the people can pay … so sometimes the people … but I like here [sic], all the people can come here and get anything that they want and I like that.

Joseph is deeply appreciative of the opportunities for social interaction, cultural exchange and learning provided by the State Library. His description of it as a good way to relax may be his way of describing values others had expressed, which aligned with the Quiet Escape and Security theme. His enjoyment of the State Library due to it being 'Far from stresses' also resonates with the major value theme of Inspiration, with its imaginative personal affordances. Joseph's awareness of others and empathy for appropriate or ideal use of the spaces shows a degree of ownership and belonging, a collective stewardship or collaboration with others to ensure all can enjoy and use the space as he does. This demonstrates the importance of Walmsley's neo-institutional approach to understanding the subjective nature of cultural experience, to gain a true understanding of what cultural experience means to the public and how they value it.

When I thanked Joseph for his time and contribution, his courtesy and respect for all in the library, including myself, is worth noting:

It's been my pleasure and I hope my information is valid for you.

I assured him it most definitely was.

### 6.1.12 JACK – 'I am your average user here, but at the same time, obviously I'm not'

Jack visits the State Library daily and, like John, is one of Adelaide's homeless population. We expected Jack's interview to be brief. Instead, it became a wide-ranging exploration of his use of the State Library as well as his appreciation for social and intellectual connection.

Jack is intelligent and had a lot to share. When asked why he came to the State Library, he responded that he came for the free WIFI for research in support of his work in computing and to serve other people's information needs. When I asked to describe these needs, he said 'People request things of me in emails and I look it up. [...] I do a fair amount of research'.

Jack shared his interest in mental health issues and associated medical research. It became clear this research at the library was a way of filling in time. However, it was also a means of addressing outstanding questions he had about his own treatment and other related issues encountered by friends and associates. Relevant to this study is the way Jack's experience with the library demonstrates how a significant group within the community gain access to information that they otherwise may not be able to pursue under challenging circumstances.

Jack uses the WIFI at the library to 'answer emails, looking up things, like how to fix people's computers and also, as you can probably guess, in the human rights area. Big fan of human rights'. When I asked to describe his first memory of visiting a library he spoke of a staff member who had a background in medical research for the universities and other members of the public he'd met and had spoken with in recent years. One was a medical student he encouraged to think creatively in his research and practice, to come up with new approaches to treatment. He described with notable pride that on graduation the student gave an award-winning talk about medicine and new ideas.

When asked what kinds of experiences and interactions in this library were important to him, Jack described the WIFI and the correspondence it allowed him to conduct with senior figures in international medical associations. He showed copies of these letters and emails. He was focussed

on research concerned with psychiatric medications prescribed for sufferers of mental illness, particularly those with adverse side effects or impacts. The State Library was supporting his attempts to gain a greater understanding of the treatment he had received for his illnesses, providing a neutral and accessible avenue through which he could explore his personal medical history. He in turn supported others with similar personal research needs, which fosters his personal sense of confidence and social connections:

> I am your average user here, but at the same time obviously I'm not […] it is these interactions that are important to me. The email gives me the ability to contact journalists […] the chief medical writer for Rupert Murdoch's News Limited in Australia and she reckons I've saved her five years' worth of research. Now I've got that in one of my emails.

The State Library is a conduit for Jack to maintain ongoing communications with the broader community and to perform research for the benefit of others. By continuing his research into issues of concern to him, he aims to influence government policy. Jack's engagement demonstrates that the public value more about the State Library than free access to the internet and a safe indoor meeting space. They value what the access enables, such as: communication with people around the world; the reinforcement provided by the acknowledgement of experts and journalists; and the ability to remain an active citizen within a democracy despite impoverished circumstances. Jack's responses demonstrate how the State Library continues to cultivate and diffuse useful knowledge via the provision of IT services. This original objective of the South Australian Literary Association is still appreciated by many of our survey respondents and may be especially valued by the more isolated or vulnerable members of the community.

When I asked how important the library is to his life and the cultural life of Adelaide, Jack chose to focus not so much on cultural life, but on community life. He discussed his passion for social justice and 'things that kill people when they shouldn't […] the increased deaths are preventable and shouldn't be happening'.

Beyond his exploration of mental health issues, Jack shared an example of cancer research he had pursued after a friend's wife was diagnosed with breast cancer. Jack located the latest treatments through peer reviewed publications in order to advise his friend about the most appropriate treatment options. His frustration with an imperfect medical system was as palpable as his desire to help others. Jack is able to access the latest medical publications through the WIFI of the State Library. In addition to these facilities, the institution also provides him at no financial cost with a secure and familiar site and the facilities required to maintain his skills. His responses highlight an

under reported aspect of the State Library: the provision of an outlet for marginalised groups to research and communicate their experiences. The institution, especially open spaces like The Hub on the ground floor, also provides Jack with a valuable sense of social connection and intellectual engagement, at a point in his life where he appears to be isolated and marginalised by society. Jack discussed the impact his research has on his immediate circle and the difference having a place like the library makes within the Adelaide community. He was keen to share with me his interests in mental health medications, issues around obesity and cancer prevention. Jack may not be a recognised health practitioner and may also have been overstating the impact of his research. However, for members of the public who cannot afford to access medical specialists, Jack represents a conduit to (presumably) authentic and trustworthy research accessed via the State Library.

Jack was a considerate interview subject and was clearly trying to help, often reflecting on his own interest in research. When I asked for one story about the State Library and why people should come here, his response illustrates the interconnected and subjective nature of the library experience. All you have to do is 'Just have a look – there's the free WIFI, and a relatively nice environment. When it's quite hot, there's air conditioning in here. They're reasonably friendly'.

Excluded from his previous occupation, Jack finds purpose, comfort and company in the State Library, pursuing his enquiries via the free WIFI within a secure and welcoming environment. This enables him to maintain his level of IT knowledge and related practical skills which, someday, may lead him back to gainful employment and recognition. Jack gives the impression that he visits the State Library every day primarily to help others, sharing what he finds with those in need, to help friends navigate their way through difficult times.

### 6.1.13 SHELAGH – 'You get to have everything'.

Shelagh completed her Year 12 studies only a few weeks prior to the interview. She visited the State Library 'whenever I am in the city and have some time to kill'. Shelagh was using the library to explore an author and topic that had little to do with her future employment prospects. However, her visits had everything to do with exploring personal interests and the pursuit of a life-long education.

Shelagh's high school studies focussed on science and maths, which she describes as 'nightmarish subjects'. She hopes her choices will provide career pathway options, beginning with a degree in

Advanced Science at Flinders University. The State Library provides a quiet and contemplative space, allowing her to explore subjects beyond her goal-oriented formal education.

> Right now, I'm reading *Crime and Punishment* […] by Dostoyevsky. I finished the first chapter, like, last time I came here so I'm going to read one more chapter then go home […] I hear it's quite philosophical, like it's, you know, it's about morality and stuff. I'm interested in philosophy, but the writings of Nietzsche and stuff, they're kind of like inaccessible to me. I mean, I understand it, but it takes a lot of effort.

Shelagh demonstrates an enchantment with the learning possibilities afforded by the State Library. She sees these as extending beyond the more vocationally 'sensible' topics she chose in her final year of high school to increase her chances of employment. She was an engaging interview subject, just free of exams and spending the liminal period of transition between high school and university enrolment at the State Library. Reading nineteenth century Russian literature was a way to 'kill some time'. This demonstrates the latent value of the library collections and the unknowable impact that the books and the spaces have until they are activated by a member of the public. Shelagh's exploratory reading is currently an enjoyable exploration of a new subject and author. She may have long harboured an interest in Dostoyevsky, but the pressures of her study (and other possible environmental influences) may have denied her the opportunity to pursue it. However, this moment in her life – between high school and university - offers a chance to broaden her imaginative horizons beyond the challenges and limitations of strictly vocational study. Through fostering her imagination, she is supporting her own learning in a way she may not yet appreciate.

Azar Nafisi argues against the binary opposition of choices Shelagh describes between humanities topics and more 'useful' fields:

> Imaginative knowledge is pragmatic: it helps shape our attitude to the world and our place in it and influences our capacity to make decisions. Politicians, educators, businessmen – we are all effected by this vision or its lack. If it is true that in a democracy, imagination and ideas are secondary, a sort of luxury, then what is the purpose of life in such a society? What will make its citizens loyal or concerned about their country's well-being, and not just their own selfish pursuits? I would argue that imaginative knowledge is, in a very practical sense, indispensable to the formation of a democratic society, its vision of itself and its future, playing an important role in the preservation of the democratic ideal (2014, p. 12).

As a means of building empathy and understanding with the subject, I suggested that reading a broad range of material, especially with such challenging topics as philosophy, can sometimes help self-directed learners to develop a focus and improve their understanding. Shelagh replied that

she was 'hoping to do that by reading other stuff'. She chose to travel to the State Library to find such materials, as opposed to using her local library near her home in Glenelg, in order to:

> Read books that I'm interested in. There are libraries close to my home but the thing about them is that a lot of the books I want to read, they're not actually there. They have to come from somewhere else and you have to wait for them. Yeah, I kind of don't like that (laughter) so I come here.

Shelagh values the permanence of the state reference collection, demonstrating the continuance of the foundational values of democratic access and universal education, as well as an element of reliable access for a young person exploring a personal interest during a limited timeframe. Shelagh can be confident that when she visits the State Library to read a chapter, the State's reference copy of *Crime and Punishment* will in all likelihood be available. When I asked what sort of experience she values in the library she confirmed:

> I like that all the books are here all the time. (laughter) It's really quiet. It's quite big so there's quiet zones. Yeah, I like that. That's it pretty much. Like you can't borrow stuff because it's a reference library. Some people would consider that a drawback, but I like it because you get to have everything. It's fairly well lit. I like the vibe here.

Shelagh's references to the lighting and 'the vibe' indicate an appreciation of the site value and shared facilities of the library, enabling the level of focus, comfort and security shared by many of the interview subjects. She also visited her local library or the library at Flinders University to study for her exams, implying that these other library spaces have pre-established associations with studying for a particular purpose. She described how she would 'see all the other people there studying so much, and you think 'yeah, I must not get distracted'. The State Library, however, symbolises a more open and imaginative space. A subjective freedom of thought. Shelagh granted herself permission to explore creative and literary interests, away from home and her future university commitments, during a time in her life when she can entertain an unstructured and non-instrumental sense of enchantment. However, she is not inclined to share her delight in the library with others, perhaps indicating a level of social isolation and disconnection not uncommon amongst introverted teenagers:

> I didn't think people actually come here. I shouldn't cloud your judgement, but I don't know anyone who comes here to study for leisure like I do.

She thought it was 'nice' when I assured her that there were many others like her, such as Michelle and Carlo, enjoying the State Library facilities in pursuit of personal research projects. With this reassurance, she describes other elements of her experience that were important to her.

She shows an intense awareness and appreciation of the tactility of the reference collection on the open shelves, and the pleasures of serendipitous discovery:

> You can endlessly browse […] I just like the physicality of books. It sounds (laughter) abstract and stupid but I was just walking through the shelves and I saw this – it's not a picture book – it's like an art book on Soviet art and I never realised I was interested in that book.

Shelagh had not consciously recognised the connection between her reading of Dostoyevsky and her interest in other elements of Russian cultural history until I brought it to her attention, to which she responded: 'Maybe that's why I picked up that book!'.

The benefits of browsing physical collections are recognised internationally, particularly by students. According to Yaffe-Bellany and Stern of the Washington Post, this was recently articulated by students of Yale University, protesting against the proposed removal of books from the campus library:

> The potential that libraries represent for students is the ability to go to a random shelf, pick up a random book and realize that there's this whole new world that exists," said Felipe Pires, a junior from Brazil majoring in computer science. "That's not how the Web works — that's not how hyperlinks work" (2019).

Such random intrinsic experiences, devoid of instrumental purpose but fundamental to imaginative engagement, lie at the core of enduring challenges faced by the State Library. As Jamie alluded to earlier: should the state and by extension taxpayers, fund reading for pleasure? Is it ok for members of the public such as Shelagh to use a publicly funded cultural institution just for fun? Cost-benefit analyses inform Shelagh's self-consciousness surrounding her 'study for leisure' and love of books, as much as they are a feature of debates surrounding public value within a cultural context. This outcomes-driven mindset is not isolated to South Australia, or even the present moment. This mindset is symptomatic of the governing economic rationalist paradigm of our times. Richard Denniss describes how:

> Democracy, like child-rearing, requires more than economics or political philosophy. Just as it's a rare parent who would use a spreadsheet to decide how to allocate their time, love and money among their children, it is a rare voter who yearns to know what the long-term rate of return on public health spending or public transport spending is … Economic models are used continuously to explain to the public that the most efficient use of 'scarce public money' is to focus on one group of children or another… All democracies struggle to decide how much to spend on museums and art galleries compared to science and technology. But where neoliberalism encourages different elements of our society to see themselves as rivals for scares public funds, a cohesive society would ask itself how much more economic growth would be needed before it could fund great arts and science programs at the same time (2018, p. 50).

The instrumental value or public benefit of Shelagh's experience is currently latent and unknowable, and this does not mean its potential does not exist. It is reasonable to hypothesise that her knowledge and understanding of Dostoyevsky may one day inform her future decisions. Those decisions may be faced in an environment where her peers may not have had the opportunity to develop the imaginative knowledge and ethical insights Shelagh gained through her literary and philosophical explorations at the State Library. The devaluing of the subjective leisurely library experience may be symptomatic of commercially oriented approaches to managing and understanding cultural experiences. Such outcomes-driven approaches provide little scope to appreciate a pursuit that has no set agenda or purpose. Instead, they convert participation or engagement with any activity into a transaction, where the cost of time, money or energy should return some sort of commensurate benefit or reward. Commercial perspectives preclude the possibility of recognising or appreciating the value of doing something as unpredictable and aimless as picking up a book out of curiosity, unless there is some preordained benefit. It may just be interesting, or it could be life changing. Opening a book offers potential and possibility, or nothing at all. It could be a few minutes diversion exploring something of interest that may never deliberately be explored again. The outcome of the action and its value is unknown, not because it is intangible but because it is an activation of latent value with no guarantees and no guidelines beyond the imagination and cognitive capacity of the person with their finger on the page. The value of Shelagh idly browsing the open stacks is an investment removed from time and place. Similarly, the rewards are divorced from location and temporal context. The value she gets out of it is inspirational and transformative and may have instrumental benefits down the track. The potential is its own reward. Shelagh's experience demonstrates Holden's intrinsic value (2016) and reflects Walmsley's hopes for a shift at the policy level, 'from the endless utilitarian pursuit of generic accounts and evidence of value to an acknowledgement of the power of personal experience and narrative' (2016, p. 17).

Shelagh's library experience demonstrates other surprising and sophisticated insights concerning how younger members of the public may engage with and consider the potential of the library. She demonstrates a complex understanding of information and cultural transfer in the twenty first century. The library offers her options, not a narrow, pre-packaged set of strategic answers:

> I think […] our generation is so internet focussed, which is good. I love it … I can't live without it (laughter) But like the thing about the internet is it's too specific. It's too personalised. It kind of forces you to be in your own head, right? It kind of caters everything you see based on what you like, right? On the internet you're surrounded by people who think like you. Exactly like you. But the library, you can just come across something spontaneously,

something that you didn't like very much, then you'll be intrigued and look at it. So yeah, I like that.

Shelagh comes to the library because she feels compelled to explore moral philosophy, perhaps with instrumental intent related to her career prospects, to address a gap in her studies or out of simple curiosity. This cultural experience is cultivating her personal and intellectual growth, facilitating her transformation from a high school student to an active member of Adelaide's public. She may not pursue her interest beyond *Crime and Punishment*, but this experience, at this pivotal and transformative time in her life, will influence her next decision or life-choices. She knows she needs to know more and has turned to the State Library, rather than the internet, for guidance.

Shelagh states that the State Library is important to her life and that she 'wouldn't want it to shut down'. This may allude to the well-publicised fears amongst the staff and community regarding the library's future and restructure to meet ongoing whole-of-government efficiency dividends (Orr, 2016). Shelagh enjoys the peace and quiet, though is not sure as to its value to Adelaide. However, she adds that 'it's good that people have this resource that they can refer back to', implying her understanding of the option value associated with the institution and belief that it will remain available into her future.

The final question was to ask for the story or anecdote she would share with others about her relationship and experiences with the library. Her response is a clear articulation of value, reflecting the value implicit in survey responses associated with 'retentions and protentions' (Born, 2015). The State Library enables Shelagh to cast forward to an imagined future, featuring the positive impact of her library experience:

> I haven't been coming here for so long. Maybe twenty years down the line I will be, like, super wise and I can say 'I came here every week!' so that would be my story (laughter). It just hasn't happened yet.

Like the value of cash and culture, Shelagh's future is unfixed, unrealised and latent, yet full of potential and options waiting to be realised. Perhaps the power of Shelagh's articulations lies in her demonstration of the obstacles impeding the identification or measurement of culture's value: not even those gaining the greatest benefits are aware of them and may never be, until their need arises. However, one day, a memory may be triggered and the trace of a story reminds that unique individual of the summer she spent at the State Library reading *Crime and Punishment* and

everything it revealed to her for the first time, how it inspired her to think that decades into the future it would help to make her 'super wise'.

## 6.2 Summary

The role of cultural institutions, as part of the public service, is to provide the neutral facilitation and mediation of resources that allow for the voluntary and mutually beneficial co-creation of understanding. The State Library has done this since its inception, providing all members of the public with the knowledge they need to fulfil their intellectual appetites without requiring evidence of how it will be used. That need for evidence is relatively new and underpins the current evaluation frameworks demanded of government agencies around the world to justify the expenditure of public funding. Cultural institutions have until recently acted on trust as part of the balanced and mutually beneficial contract demonstrated in the survey responses categorised against Civic Trust & Public Service. The public is able to explore and fulfil their potential within the State Library because they have been able to enjoy the freedoms offered by the latent and option value held in trust, as part of the normative system represented by the public service. Heclo describes the function of normative systems as being to 'seed latent values in the world of fact … to 'envalue' everyday phenomena' (2002, p. 691). The State Library embodies this function, providing an everyday space where the value of the 'world of fact', (and fiction, as Shelagh so clearly shows) is accessible through the collections, the language classes and preserved by generations of librarians. This value is activated and realised, made sense of, by the everyday phenomena enacted between members of the public and the State Library. This reciprocal and functional relationship, based on trust and mutual support, is exemplified by the public contributions to this case study, though it is also largely taken for granted. However, the notable exceptions were Joseph and Edward, who grew up in cultures and political environments where citizens have limited or no democratic form of political engagement or freedom of access to information, because their governments do not trust what they may do with it.

Shelagh's love of browsing the library bookshelves may not influence any career decision of note. However, like all participants in this research program, her State Library experience may influence the greatest power she is guaranteed in our current democracy to wield. It builds her capacity to assess for herself the moral stance, authenticity and judgement of our potential leaders when she comes to vote for the first time, and every time after that. Shelagh may be amongst the most powerful young people in Adelaide, purposefully seeking out a cultural balance to her studies in

science maths, armed with Dostoyevsky to better understand her life, her world and her community. That is where and when our culture's worth can be judged because its role is not to stand up and be accounted for in the same terms used by industry for the managerial demands of policy makers. Culture's job is to measure us, to explore and shine the light of assessment and judgement on who we are, to interpret our relationships with the world and our values as individuals, and as a society. Disputing culture's value is as useful and demonstrative as blaming the mirror for one's own reflection. The public are responsible for what culture represents because the public are the objects of its study, the raw material for an inquisitive and randomly cumulative process of understanding. This knowledge imperative has informed the development of our species over millennia (Boyd, Richerson and Henrich, 2011). My interview subjects and survey respondents are merely continuing this human process of knowledge acquisition and diffusion, identifying a source to satisfy their current curiosities, sharing or storing information for future use, the outcome of which cannot currently be predicted. Cultural collections sit on bookshelves and hanging racks, stored in a box in piles of drawers, accessed from behind a desk and kept safe until needed. Their value is activated and enlivened by people like Shelagh, Luke, Maria, Jack and Alex, killing time or following a pathway to personal transformation. The value is unknowable, though it's potential can mean everything. Even non-users like Grant and Kate are able to appreciate that someday, 'someone is going to want to know about that person and that person's history'. The value of the State Library is latent, much like money: cash is entirely representative, its value only realised through an interaction and exchange, when whoever has it in their possession tries to do something with it (Khalil, 1987). According to Khalil, that value will alter, depending on the time and place it is activated. That value will also represent different things to different people. Likewise, these interviews demonstrate that the value of culture and collections are similarly subjective and not fixed, until someone engages with them to learn, explore, connect or create something from it, to activate and realise the potential of both collection items and the curious individual member of the public.

# 7  CONCLUSION

In my experience working for cultural institutions, visitor feedback is useful in two ways. It can address immediate issues regarding problems with the facilities (such as a broken lock on a bathroom door); or it can confirm that the institution is meeting public expectations.

This qualitative analysis demonstrates that the State Library is meeting or exceeding the expectations of respondents engaging with the services it provides today. The State Library has been shown to be a safe and secure physical space, egalitarian and social, whilst maintaining the epistemological ideals of its foundation. Individuals seek connection, personal identity and community. Above all, the public attend in search of knowledge, understanding and inspiration, activating the possibilities of the collections and thereby their own potential. The data collected for this thesis confirms how the members of the public perceive the State Library as a treasured and meaningful part of their lives, and those perceptions of value inform how they see themselves and their community. Such multi-faceted and subjective articulations of value resist straightforward measurement and evaluation processes. However, as citizens, cultural meaning makers and taxpayers, they do offer precious insight into who values the library and how that value is manifested. These voices must be heard and taken seriously as narratives of value by policy makers and administrators when making decisions about the State Library.

In line with Walmsley's description of the role of the arts, the public consider the State Library to be 'a vehicle through which to live life, rather than an end in [itself]' (2016, p. 14). This role contrasts with the more hedonic, contained and episodic experiences delivered by the festivals and described by Hirschman and Holbrook (1982). Dominating the cultural landscape of Adelaide, the economic appeal of the festival model lies in their ability to deliver preidentified, relatively predictable, immediately realised and measurable impacts. This is different to how the public perceive the State Library, as an active contributor to the civic, symbolic, intellectual and imaginative life of South Australia over generations. The annual reports of the State Libraries Board of South Australia confirm for the public record that they are capable of managing their reduced allocation of public funding. However, these documents are now stripped of any representational voice from the public or the public servants acting as this generation's

stewards.[41] This case study presents an opportunity to explore alternative means of reporting the value of the State Library that reflects the experiences of the public in their own voices.

My open-ended survey and interview approach elicited diverse and insightful responses that extend beyond the well-informed and theoretically grounded cultural value themes, such as those drawn on for the data analysis. I've found that the fluid nature of qualitative evidence reflects the diversity of the respondents. This is something that should be embraced, rather than restricted for the purposes of commensurability and brevity. My approach supports the value of maintaining a direct relationship between organisations and their audiences, rather than one mediated by external consultants or even the most effective digital evaluation platforms. Third party evaluation methods require additional expenditure. The direct subscription cost may not seem like much but may require an unattainable standard of equipment, expertise and infrastructure to support it. These additional costs to an already cash-strapped sector may be better directed to supporting and nurturing the next generation of artists, audiences, practitioners or providing adequate preservation strategies for collections and heritage sites.

The mixed-methods approach I engaged for this case study is drawn from a range of studies highlighting the need for greater representation of the public perspective in reporting. This will create better understanding of how value is made manifest by cultural experience. Amongst these, Walmsley describes cultural experience as 'something to be contemplated rather than consumed or dissected'. He confirms that the public are driven by 'reverential motivations' and symbolic associations with cultural institutions like the State Library, seeking escape from their everyday lives in places of enchantment, discovery and peace (2016, p. 11). The data presented herein as narrative profiles of value provide this public perspective, illustrating what value means to the public. This perspective provides much needed context for economic performance measures and visitor statistics required for the State Library to meet its statutory requirements. As Holloway describes, it is essential that all involved in the collection, reception and interpretation of research are 'meaning makers and theorizers within a dialogical context' (1997, p. 36). The interviews give names to some of the numbers through the door. Their narratives of value explain what that data means. They should be an essential component of reporting between government and cultural institutions. Removing or dismissing them not only prevents administrators from

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understanding of the impact of their decisions, it undercuts the relationship of trust between a government and the public they represent.

This thesis has pursued two key questions:

1. what meaning and value does the State Library of South Australia generate through the delivery of co-created and intra-subjective collective experiences for the public; and
2. how may this value be articulated and reported in a way that will both complement regulatory reporting requirements and retain meaning and significance to the public.

The data presented in Section Two explored the potential to answer these questions, through the provision of narrative context to accompany quantitative statements as part of regular statutory reporting processes. Narrative provides meaning to the numbers in terms that policy makers, the public and State Library teams all recognise, value and understand.

This final chapter presents my four conclusions drawn from this research regarding:

1. How the public values the history and heritage of the State Library;
2. Why a different, though not new, approach to reporting cultural value, is required;
3. How a house is not as valuable as a home; and
4. The state of culture in South Australia

## 7.1   History, heritage & the importance of continuity

A significant proportion of survey respondents and interview subjects refer to the connection of the State Library to the history of South Australia.  The institution plays an active role in building trust and community identity through the reinforcement of personal and collective memory. This form of value does not appear in the list of intrinsic experiential values identified by Walmsley (2013) or Radbourne, Glow et al (2010) as being part of intrinsic audience experiences. It also differs from Throsby's historical value as it reflects a continuity of an individual's experience that occurred within the site, connecting those members of the public to their personal pasts, rather than deriving meaning and value solely through an appreciation of architectural styles and built heritage. This emergent value concerns people's experiences within a built site of heritage significance and how its historical associations inform their experience. Therefore, it may be considered a new contribution to knowledge relating to how the public values cultural institutions like the State Library.

Heritage value and the sense of both collective and individual continuity fostered by the library experience contributes to the State Library's institutional value, informing the level of trust, inclusion and authenticity experienced by many respondents. This emergent value theme was bolstered by transgenerational family connections which inform respondents' personal memories and aspirations for the future. Longitudinal and accretive meaning and significance is also reflected more tangibly in the collections themselves. These are built up over time and shared amongst generations of library users and stewards, strangers with whom today's users identify and commune in the co-creation of knowledge and experience. Together with the library's collections, the potential of continual collective use, stewardship and public experience, the State Library consolidates and mediates the cultural memory of the State. I have identified through my analysis that this heritage value, and the sense of continuity if affords, is recognised and appreciated by the library public as part of Adelaide's community identity. It must be considered when addressing the cultural value of the State Library and, by extension, the significance of the North Terrace Cultural Precinct.

Cultural memory, as facilitated the State Library, is more than as passive collection of objects. Assman describes the formation of cultural memory as dependent on the two separate functions of the canon: the presentation of select masterpieces of art, literature and sacred texts, and the archive which she described as:

> The storing of documents and artefacts of the past that do not meet all these standards [of the canon] but are nevertheless deemed interesting or important enough to not let them vanish on the highway to total oblivion. While emphatic appreciation, repeated performance, and continued individual and public attention are the hallmark of objects in the cultural working memory, professional preservation and withdrawal from general attention mark the contents of the reference memory. Emphatic reverence and specialized historical curiosity are the two poles between which the dynamics of cultural memory is played out (2008, p. 101).

The State Library can be appreciated using Assman's description, as the site where South Australia's cultural memory is formed. This rests on both the reverent selection of notable canonical items (such as those relating to the foundation of the state and specialist collection areas) as well as the vast archival holdings which form the 'basis of what can be said in the future about the present when it will have become past' (2008, p. 102). Assman's view was repeated almost verbatim by one survey respondent who asserted that the library is 'a link to our past and our future'. This transtemporal experience was evident in a number of interview and survey respondents and adds weight to my argument regarding the latent nature of library's value.

An examination of State Library's history became critical, once its role in the cultivation of cultural memory, community identity and shared knowledge emerged from the data as a valuable component of the public experience . The historical overview (Chapter 4) contributes to an appreciation of what the library symbolises to the public today, such as free access to knowledge, mutual support and value of life-long educational opportunities to a functional democracy. These expectations and the values that underpin them drove the foundation of the State Library and are evident in the earliest documentary evidence of the colony. The State Library stands today as a symbol of the value of an informed democracy and Adelaide's distinct cultural identity, consolidated by its location within the North Terrace Cultural Precinct. This finding aligns with what Holden and Hewison define as heritage: 'all inherited resources which people value beyond mere utility' (2014, p. 2). Any political decisions or evaluation of the role and performance of the State Library must consider this legacy. As one respondent insisted, 'it is part of who we are'.

### 7.1.1   How Provenance confers and confirms value

Provenance is a narrative of value and significance associated with items and collections. Provenance confirms an object's history and attributes authenticity to their origin, makers and record of ownership. This documentary evidence confers their value. According to Russell and Winkworth, who prepared the principal guide for assessing the significance of Australian collections for the Collections Council of Australia, provenance is 'the life story of an item or collection and a record of its ultimate derivation and its passage through the hands of various owners' (2009, 15).

Cosler confirms that a cultural object's history of ownership is an intrinsic factor of establishing value (2016, p. 19). The story of an item's origins, the influence it may engender, and the record of ownership, is the narrative history by which items accrue and enhance their significance. The use of historical narrative demonstrates the heritage value of the institution and extrapolates the symbolic meaning the State Library to the public as a site of storytelling, knowledge transfer and cultural exchange over thousands of years.

The State Library and its collection is representative of intangible and continuous value, including access to knowledge, cultural exchange, self-sufficiency, and invention. Underpinning them all is the ability to read and communicate. The links between the State Library and the spread of literacy extend to the foundation of the colony. I've addressed how it informed the character of the community it gave rise to and continues to provide support to today in Chapter 4. This

functional relationship between the community and the State Library was evident in the many respondents and several interview subjects who engage with the ELIS classes to improve their English language skills. Their ability to communicate effectively enables them to fully participate in the South Australian community, to everyone's benefit. Their confidence and proficiency with the language, and their sense of belonging in Adelaide, is of particular value to the University sector, who have become increasingly reliant on the international student market. Reconstructing the influences and inspiration that lay behind the development of the State Library demonstrates that many of the founding aspiration values. The narratives of value presented confirms that they continue to inform the value of the public's experience today. By ensuring that both locals and new arrivals to Kaurna land have trusted facilities and free access to information, the State Library continues support their transition to a new way of life, which benefits individuals, the community and the State's economy. This would be an important element to capture in reporting structures and conveyed in narrative terms to communicate the value of the Library, particularly the ELIS program.

The State Library's record of public ownership has remained unbroken since 1856, when the new colonial government accepted the 'permanent responsibility to provide a library for the public'. This responsibility should be considered as evidence of how the citizens and the representative officials of South Australia are obliged by legislation to value the State Library (Bridge 1986, p. 30). It is a record of provenance. This evidence should be seen as a strength, rather than an onerous financial burden. It attests to South Australia's social cohesion, access to opportunities and community identity, all of which add value to the standard of living within the state.

## 7.2   Why a different approach is required

By splitting cultural value into three separate subcategories of value, and aligning corresponding stakeholder groups, John Holden (2006) may have over-simplified the concept of public value in a cultural context. What is evident in the literature, and the data gathered for this thesis, is a consequent division of thought and argument between the stakeholders aligned with the two most prominent and immediate values – intrinsic and instrumental. Institutional value, that which underpins the others and is perhaps the least tangible, observable and measurable, is lost or at best, underappreciated by decision makers. However, my data shows that it is a highly valued element of the public experience: without it, there would be no trust in the information, free access or sense of community connection. Why has institutional value been de-valued?

Institutional value may have become obscured by scandals and crimes in recent decades involving representatives of other forms of public institution, such as banks and churches. Much trust has been lost and perhaps the word 'institution' drew negative associations. The immediacy of capturing intrinsic and instrumental values, as described by Holden, may also suit the perceived imperative to address the 'problem' of cultural value. They are more likely to be measurable, policy friendly and suit the short-term solutions required to develop strategies to address what seem like perpetual arts funding crises – be they in the UK or Australia. Policy makers and other stakeholders rightly require evidence to inform decision-making. This is an essential part of deliberations that will influence the future of an institution or the direction of their public engagement strategies. The problem arises when the complexity of cultural experience, as demonstrated in this thesis, is reduced to numbers: it is simpler to generate numerical reports on visitor numbers or budget expenditure than it is to analyse the accretion of transgenerational investment and phenomenological experiences consolidated over decades. However, as many in the South Australian cultural sector know, providing evidence of value in the form of careful budget management, stable visitor numbers or innovative artistic or curatorial practice does not protect organisations from cuts. This is illustrated by the policy driven imperatives imposed on the State Library other South Australian cultural institutions to meet efficiency dividends into the foreseeable future. This problem of cultural value is purely ideological.

### 7.2.1   Quality over quantity

My bespoke approach to data gathering for this thesis was aimed at capturing authentic expressions of value and meaning from members of the public engaging with the State Library. Such a comparably analogue and direct approach could easily be incorporated into existing reporting regimes, if the policy environment and capacity of the State Library allowed. Reflecting on this process, I have identified three insights, that echo across the cultural value literature and underpin my analysis. These insights may indicate further work beyond the boundaries of the State Library and Laboratory Adelaide project:

1. Cultural evaluation is a complex and challenging task. Adopting a qualitative approach requires more than one set of analytical tools from a range of disciplines. These may not be familiar to either researchers or practitioners. They may also be unaffordable or unsupported by the technical infrastructure and expertise of many arts and cultural organisations, particularly those in the small-to-medium and independent sectors. The

cultural sector is very good at storytelling. This strength can be activated to complement financial and other qualitative reporting requirements with qualitative context;

2.  The gleaning of data directly from members of the public involved in the co-creation of value is critical, but also presents challenges regarding the timing and selection of subjects. This is good to be aware of but not impossible or costly to overcome. Allowing institutions to reclaim their direct relationships with their audiences, rather than outsourcing audience communications and evaluation to costly digital platforms or external consultants, would obviate these challenges;

3.  Culture's value is in the eye of the beholder – the value of an experience within an institution like the State Library is tied to a time, a place, a people and the priorities of the individual taking part, as demonstrated by my interview subjects and survey respondents. The latent value of the institution is activated individuals in negotiation with and relation to their sense of self, of others and of the world around them.

This last point is crucial. Experience is not simply what is going on at a particular point in time – such as while watching the performance or reading a book. We are a thinking species and ruminate on what we read, hear and observe, making connections with our curiosity-driven intellects to form knowledge and conclusions over the course of our lives. Less polemically, we also don't always derive value from what is going on at a particular time. Cultural experience includes what goes on beforehand and afterwards in the spectator's memory, in their conscious, unconscious and self-conscious reflective processes. This could take decades. The data presented herein illustrates that the realities of delivering cultural experiences and ensuring the sustainability of a cultural institution are complicated and unique to each institution, as distinct and variable as each member of the public who walks through the doors or scrolls through the digital collections. The activation of public value in cultural institutions like the State Library does not work by rigid, structured practices within well-scheduled timelines. As presented in Shelagh's narrative of value, the hedonic benefits of cultural engagement may be immediately perceptible, but the full-scale of that impact may not be evident for years. So far, the capacity to capture evidence of the causal links between cultural experience and life-long impact eludes us all.

In both surveys and interviews, the public offered insights into the use of the library as a multi-functional space, the networked nature of audiences and their diverse points of engagement at different times in their lives. They value historical or commemorative exhibitions, public programs and events, access to communal facilities and archival or heritage collections. They also

demonstrate priorities more typical of library users. They engage with the institution and its collections for the purposes of academic or personal research, make use of a democratic civic space to foster a sense of community connection and identity. Others enjoy the simple act of reading, browsing the bookshelves and quietly studying. This data presents for the first time not only what some of Adelaide's culturally active citizenry value about the State Library, but also what it means to them. They are shown to be a diverse community sharing culture and heritage through the State Library, creating collective understanding which, in an ethnographic sense, symbolises 'a shared set of meanings or a cognitive map of meanings ... The cultural knowledge that any group of people have is their knowledge of this map' (Punch 2014, p. 127). The collective cultural experience available to South Australians on North Terrace resembles a cognitive map for the public, demonstrating the illogicality of seeing each institution's audiences separately. They interpret the experience of the State Library as an experience within the North Terrace Cultural Precinct to which all occupants contribute and support. Perhaps we should consider the public of the State Library not as cultural consumers, but as cultural meaning and place-makers. They are activating, interpreting and contributing to the value of the State Library through their interactions with each other and with other institutions. Their sporadic and unpredictable engagement makes sense of the public financial investments made in the sites and the collections, and their return on that investment comes in many forms just as sporadic and unpredictable. For this reason alone, traditional financial reporting mechanisms cannot adequately address cultural value. Rather than attempting to manipulate the cultural experience to suit traditional economics and reporting frameworks, this thesis concludes that it is reporting frameworks that are in need of adjustment to accommodate cultural value. This conclusion is not isolated to those grappling with economic rationalism from within the cultural sector.

## 7.3    Learning to like economics

As addressed in Chapter 2, several international economists appreciate there is more than one form of value that counts. Arjo Klamer provides much needed clarification regarding the shifting perception of value over recent decades (2017). His work informs my understanding of the changing views of how an institution such as the State Library has been valued at different points in history. Klamer's descriptions of value and values were useful at a point where I concluded that the concept of 'cultural value' had been abstracted beyond the point of practicality.

Klamer discusses the etymology of 'economics' and its connections to the personal elements of the value of the home, the *oikos*, as distinct to the house - the bricks and mortar structure which can be assessed, measured and valued for its commercial potential.

> Houses are important but homes are what define us: it is the home that really matters to me. Even if the house were to fall down, the home will remain standing, at least so I presume. The real loss occurs when we lose our home – as I once did because of a divorce. Then the house represents mere financial value because it has to be split. Somehow. My home stands for everything that I share with my wife and kids. It evokes the atmosphere in our house with its furniture, decorations and special places. Also with the memories that we generated there and now cherish together, the shared stories, the dogs and cats buried in the back yard, the party that we gave last year, the Christmas celebrations, the dramatic scenes, the door posts where we measure the height of the kids throughout the years (gosh, how they've grown!). Not to forget the gatherings with friends and families, and so much more. (2017, p. 5)

The data I present in this thesis shows how the State Library is more than a building providing access to information. It is experienced and valued by the respondents and interview subjects for the associations it holds for them which have built up over time and across generations. This was demonstrated in their memories of discovery and enchantment, inspiration and assistance, peace and security and the social interactions that have already occurred and hopes for those yet to take place within the institution's diverse structures and spaces. Klamer's work also justifies my qualitative narrative based approach to communicate how the public values the library in terms that are challenging to translate into commercial language. Klamer's description of how he values his home illustrates this challenge:

> The economic discussion nowadays tends to focus on the numbers, on the things that can be bought and that therefore are measured in monetary terms. The numbers convey a sense of concreteness and practicality. A house is good for numbers. A house is concrete. […] A house is a product that can be sold and bought. The *oikos* is another matter altogether. It makes for an entirely different discussion, a discussion without many numbers and without the appearance of concreteness and practicality of a house. It is the quality of the *oikos* that I really care about. (2017, p. 5)

Klamer's description of *oikos* may be used to address the quality of the relationship between the public and the State Library. This relationship is critical to our understanding of the institution's meaning and value; how, like a home, this meaning is made up of a complex shared system of memory, comfort, intellectual stimulation, security and shared values. My data shows that this value and meaning is nourished by shared moments with family and strangers, the recognition of shared values and common language, and the intra-subjective experiences that support a sense of stewardship. All these factors foster a transgenerational path dependence that informs the South Australian community's identity and the individuals' sense of belonging. This concept of *oikos*,

when applied to my case study also explains the early colonists' need for a public library and access to books. As addressed in Chapter 4, the proposed library was intended not only for their education but also to reinforce order and resilience and to extend the reach of the British Empire. The founding entrepreneurs were convinced by their own backgrounds and experiences that a library of information would cultivate the intellects and imaginary lives of the colonists. The trunk full of books was to support their adaptation to new surroundings and improve the colony's chances of survival. The collection of books and the promise of a library transplanted the culture and community they'd left behind, struck like a cutting from a favourite shrub into strange new soil. New roots struggle to find nourishment and purchase in an exotic and challenging new environment. The data here shows that today, the library serves a similar function, assisting new arrivals with their transition to new lives and identities in a new country, affording opportunities to also re-engage with familiar distant landscapes of memory and belonging. The library anchors them in the world, a civic space offering a comparable experience to one they enjoyed elsewhere at other times, building on their knowledge, confidence and cultural capital. By providing a free entry point, the State Library informs new arrivals' perspectives on Adelaide, what South Australia actually is and how they may find their place within it. This contributes to the memory mapping described by Mitchell and Elwood, creating shared understandings over time and across different locations, enabling linkages between institutions, visitors and experiences in a transgenerational and temporally ambiguous memory map (2013, p.33). Learned behaviour and expectations from past experiences are re-enacted, transferred and embedded. This is seen in Joseph's description of encounters with other library users, his careful discernment of when not to interrupt their study time for new conversations. Individuals may bring subjective perspectives, needs, goals and intentions to the library. However, the regular collective act of re-entering and re-engaging with the site builds a shared understanding and empathy which recognises in other users the value each hopes to gain, based on their own experience. An accord is voluntarily struck between members of the public and the State Library. This compact of trust and shared values ensures the ongoing regeneration of institutional value, activating the latent possibilities of the collections and the potential public. Through their engagement, visitors invest their time and energies to give meaning to the collections, perpetuating their value and fostering a sense of ownership of the public resource. The library belongs to them as much as they find a sense of belonging in the library, where, as one respondent suggested, 'citizens from all walks of life [come] to share the learning space together'. Their relationship with the State Library is a part of their life, not apart from it. Considered 'a second home' by some respondents, the State Library is the irreplaceable

*oikos* of South Australia. It defines us and, as Klamer suggests, stands for everything we share rather than what we own.

## 7.4   Bread and Circuses

Jo Caust describes how since the 1990s, the cultural policy environment in South Australia was designed to support the importation of international cultural experiences to Adelaide via the Arts Festival (2005, p. 31). Cultural policy has swung in their favour since. In South Australian creative circles, the dominance of festivals over the cultural landscape is a perennial source of debate. Adelaide's festivals are indeed rich and wonderful experiences, cultivating exotic tastes, creating annual expectations and presenting fabulous stories. In return for their government investment, they are able to report an impressive economic impact, calculated, according to the Festivals Adelaide website, to be AUD $109.1 million for 2018. According to Marsh of the *Adelaide Review*, while the State Library is reducing staff and restructuring operations in response to funding cuts, the Adelaide Festival of the Arts received an additional $1.25 million. I suggest that this policy model is not equally supportive of the development and promotion of South Australian culture through local institutions, collections and artists. This has long-term impacts on audience development and the resilience of the local arts and cultural sector in South Australia. The current cultural policy environment and commensurate regime of funding and reporting structures don't foster choice in how to produce or experience culture in South Australia, as practitioners, audiences or members of the public. The experiences, funding levels and organisational structures within institutions and across cultural forms are different. These differences should be reflected in the relevant evaluation models.

The interaction with new arrivals is a clear demonstration of the multi-facetted and complex contribution permanent institutions provide for the community. The State Library welcomes people to Adelaide, helps them find a job, and to navigate the new set of social norms. Ultimately it helps individuals find themselves and to realise their potential. The State Library facilitates knowledge creation and transfer in a free and accessible space to whoever is in need of it, all but two days of the year. By contrast, the festival calendar encourages a binge mentality to cultural consumption and engagement. Adelaide feasts while the festivals jam the streets with exotic offerings, creating appetites for (unquestionably brilliant) high-end experiences. Their accessibility depends on government subsidy. Their appeal relies on a quantum of thronging strangers and friends generating an unsustainable buzz that makes us proud and part of something wonderful,

for a few weeks of the year. The off-season is thrown into an unflattering shadow, drained of its summer colour and the much vaunted 'vibrancy', as though the cultural grass is always greener in March when it's crackling underfoot. One could be forgiven for thinking that the only way to promote and present culture in Adelaide is to sell it as a festival, because then it will be visible, measurable and relatively cost effective. As Holden suggests, festivals have become our culture 'because culture is what gets funded' (2009, p. 449).

Festivals may deliver us full houses, but do they really reflect our *oikos*? Is it an honest reflection or something more suited to the Instagram age: performative, photoshopped, ranked and comparable? Is that really who we are? Another economist, Richard Denniss, may not have been directly addressing questions regarding the formal regulation of cultural production and consumption through government funded festivals. However, he does raise the role of institutions in functional democracies, which is relevant to this argument. He asserts:

> 'Without institutions that can be trusted, how do we govern? How do we turn policy ideas into parliamentary action? While there are no simple answers, creating and rebuilding our institutions will obviously play a major role' (2018, p. 62).

Denniss was discussing institutions like banks and churches in their betrayals of public trust. However, he highlights the importance of trust in the public realm, expected within our civic spaces, 365 days a year. My data indicates that the State Library generates trust in the government, the community and amongst members of the public. This social cohesion benefits users and non-users alike. This trust is established and regularly reinforced because the Library has enjoyed a long-term year-round relationship with the public of Adelaide. Festivals can really only offer an occasional and fleeting seasonal fling. The stabilising influence of the trusting relationship between the State Library and the public has implications for our democracy and community identity. This relationship should be recognised, valued and protected by those responsible for the State Library's financial sustainability. Therefore, new approaches to reporting this value must be implemented. They can't afford not to.

## 7.5   How the public values the State Library of South Australia

Holloway advised that 'being a qualitative researcher means, among other things, being able to tell a good story and focus on meaning over measurement' (2011, p. 970). Two decades ago, David Throsby confirmed that 'it should not be difficult to accept that cultural value is a multiple and shifting thing which cannot be comprehended within a single domain' (2000, p. 28). However, as I've addressed in Chapter 2, this hasn't dissuaded policy makers and developers around Australia

from attempting to devise totalising, standardised cultural evaluation tools. This thesis draws on a body of cultural value and library evaluation literature, yet revolves around the social sciences and arts marketing approaches, to understand the meaning and value of the State Library from the public's perspective. The most appropriate method to communicate these meanings and connections across generations is by narrative, recommended by Meyrick et al as 'a dynamic ordering of information that can cope with time' (2018, p. 100). Through the public's articulations and narratives of value, the State Library is seen as an active participant in the co-creation of community identity, subjective inspiration and social cohesion over generations. These experiences are informed by personally transformative and imaginative interactions with the site's built heritage and collections over their lifetimes. This recognition of longitudinal value extends beyond the boundaries of the State Library and contributes to the public's relationship with the North Terrace Cultural Precinct. The lived connections with the past are a reflection of the South Australian community identity and its potential. The record of ownership of the State Library is also the provenance of the State and the public's narratives of value prove that it matters.

The quality and value of the public's experience is dependent on both the physical and digital sites, the geographical location, phenomenological interactions (symbolic, relational and interpersonal) with the collections and the current stewards of the State Library. Thus, the institution is positioned as both a keeper and producer of longitudinal cultural value within the public realm where, according to Hewison, 'people become citizens, not just consumers' (2006, p. 21). The public is cognisant of the State Library's civic contribution to South Australia's culture in the ethnographic sense, as a 'cognitive map of meanings' (Spradley, 1980 in Punch, 2014, p. 127). This is demonstrated by public perceptions of belonging and social cohesion. These are institutional values that benefit all South Australians, regardless of their level of engagement with the State Library. They confirm the State Library as a site of symbolic interaction with the public, supporting how they 'define, interpret and give meaning to situations, and then behave in response […] not some 'objective' reality of the situation itself. The insiders' view and their meanings […] are paramount' (Punch, 2014, p. 127).

I have shown here that the State Library makes manifest Holden's description of institutional value. Through the narratives of value and open statements from respondents, several other major findings from across the cultural value literature have been shown to be evident at the State Library. The cultural value of the institution is delivered and perpetuated in collaboration with the public. Through the symbolic interaction of their experiences, they perceive a range of different

forms of value for themselves and their community, and in doing so, unite the State Library, the North Terrace Cultural Precinct and South Australia as a single precious entity. As Holden suggests, cultural institutions such as the State Library can thus be understood, appreciated and valued as 'not simply mediators between politicians and the public, but as active agents in the creation or destruction of what the public values':

> Trust in the public realm, transparency and fairness, are all values that can be generated by the institution in its dealings with the public… it is through recognizing these values, and, crucially, deciding for itself how to generate them, that the moral purpose of an organisation becomes apparent, and where organisational rhetoric meets reality. (2006, p. 18).

People have gathered on the shores of Karrawirraparri, the river sacred to the Kaurna people, for thousands of years for the chance to hear learned, trusted and friendly voices, sharing stories and knowledge. The State Library is part of this ancient continuum, an institution that draws people together from around the world, to improve their chances of survival in changing environments, to realise their potential, to influence how the community sees itself and to project possibilities of what the public could become. Shortly after the opening of the Institute Building in 1860, Adelaide's burgeoning need for cultural experience and learning burst beyond its capacity, spilling along North Terrace and around the State to form the Public Libraries Association, the Art Gallery of South Australia, the South Australian Museum and the University of Adelaide. The cultivation and diffusion of useful knowledge continued through the formation of niche arts and scientific societies and membership organisations, like the South Australian Geographic Society and the Royal South Australian Society of Arts, Writers SA, the Royal Society of South Australia and many others, some of whom remain tenants within State Library buildings. How much the State has learned, how far the community has come, and perhaps why they have not gone further, can be traced and revisited through the collections of the State Library. These collections are as valuable as we wish to make them – their value is made manifest, activated from its latent state, by the public's need, interest and connection. Like any book, or a library of them, you need to open the covers and scan the page before you can know the story and judge its relevance or value.

As demonstrated by the survey and interview data, and supported by the wealth of available literature, there are many ways of understanding the meaning and value of the State Library. This has been a source of debate since the trunk full of books remained locked and out of the reach of the early colonists it was compiled to serve. The current State Library represents a continuation of this original offering of support from South Australia's imperfect British founders. The institutions of Adelaide's North Terrace Cultural Precinct evolved with the society that grew around them,

exemplifying almost 180 years-worth of changing attitudes in their practices, learning to co-exist, adapting to changed political and economic shifts and continuing through it all to keep the public informed.

The State Library facilitates a process of knowledge creation and exchange that has been part of the human condition since times before speech. The public will continue to value the State Library of South Australia and what it represents for individuals and the community. It is part of who they are and how they see their world, allowing them to imagine a future they want to live in, and providing what they may need to realise their potential. Currently, there is no option to communicate this cultural value to decision makers, who despite decades of research advising against it, continue to be fixated on commercially driven quantitative indicators. This is a contradiction that must be addressed at policy level.

To learn the true story of the value of the State Library I have turned to the people who value it the most. By adopting a multidisciplinary approach and engaging directly with library users to develop narratives of cultural value, I found there is much scope to improve how we report and communicate value across all corners of our lives. This need to provide meaningful narrative context to the tidal wave of numerical data swamping all areas of endeavour is critical. Few of my respondents or interview subjects spoke of the State Library in dollar terms. Many declared it was a vital part of their lives. They believe themselves to be active members of a community, not a functional component of an economic machine. These narratives of cultural value must be told. They must be promoted and communicated across the reporting regime and throughout the organisation. This would empower the current custodians with evidence and confirmation that their work is appreciated so that all levels of government understand: the State Library counts and should be celebrated and treasured.

We all take much for granted, believing the institutions, services and people we love will always be there and accessible. That we can count indefinitely on their knowledge and support to help us navigate our way through life. Without understanding and communicating the value and meaning of what matters to us, be it a parent, a friend or a favourite corner of a library that fires up our imagination, we create a false impression. We risk them not knowing what they mean to our lives. The people, experiences and institutions we love make life worth living. They are valued beyond price, beyond measure and this sense of worth informs their identity, as well as our own. They need to be told how much they mean to us, if they are to appreciate their own value. Humans

evolved through the shaping and sharing of knowledge through stories. The State Library of South Australia is full of such stories. However, if we are all to appreciate the full scope of the cultural value it provides, it needs better ways to tell its own. I hope my work will help them to formulate their next chapter.

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