



# TE TĀHUHU O TE RANGI ŌPŌTIKI DISTRICT LIBRARY

COMMUNITY SURVEY RESULTS



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## **ANNA HAYWARD GENERAL MANAGER COMMUNITY SERVICES & DEVELOPMENT**

Our library is more than just a building. It holds the knowledge of the past, the learning of the present and the aspiration of the future. The survey results show us it is a vital part of achieving a strong future for the Ōpōtiki District and the people who live here.

## **JULIA BURRUP MANAGER TE TĀHUHU O TE RANGI**

“A library in the middle of a community is a cross between an emergency exit, a life raft, and a festival. They are cathedrals of the mind, hospitals of the soul, theme parks of the imagination. On a cold, rainy island, they are the only sheltered public spaces where you are not a consumer, but a citizen instead.” – Caitlin Moran

Te Tāhuhu o Te Rangi is governed by the values of: manaaki (care); rongo (engagement); and pono (truth/an understanding); they guide everything we do. These results show that our community resonates with the values we seek to achieve.

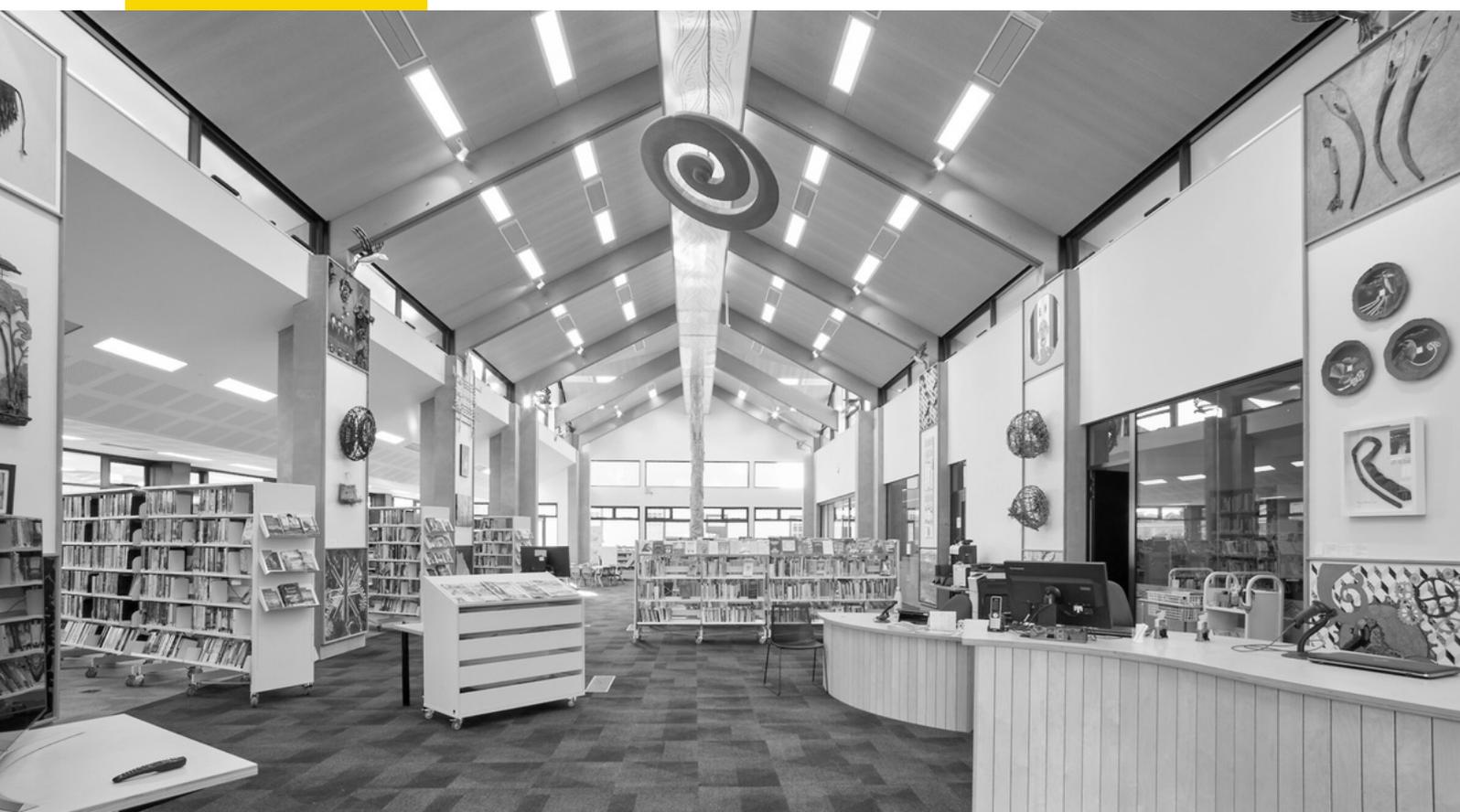
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## OUR INTENTION

### THE STORY BEHIND THE SURVEY

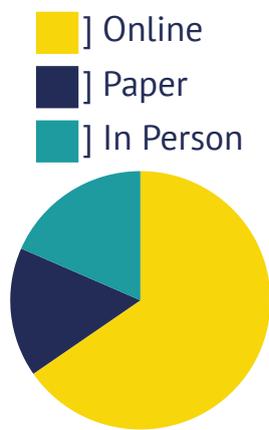
This consultation project was initiated as part of the ongoing development of Te Tāhuhu o Te Rangi as a multifaceted library and community hub for the Ōpōtiki community.

Libraries exist to serve their communities, and feedback is vital in ensuring that our service and the community's needs stay closely entwined, especially in a modern climate of constant flux. Our community's voice is our guiding light. Ngā mihi nui ki a koutou katoa.



# WHAT WE DID

## SURVEY DEVELOPMENT & REVIEW



A seven question survey was developed to explore five library priority areas. Responses were collected during January 2024, via online, paper and face-to-face submissions, with a total of 179 unique submissions received.

A themes analysis was applied to the survey results. A themes analysis highlights commonalities within the responses, with separate themes applied to the priority areas.

### PRIORITIES:

1. What works well
2. What to improve
3. Role of the library in community
4. Personal impact of the library
5. Life without the library

### QUESTIONS:

1. What is the library doing well?
2. What can the library do better?
3. What additions would you like to see at the library? (e.g., new resources, activities, services not available in Ōpōtiki)
4. What role does the library play in building a sense of community?
5. What does it mean for the library to be a welcoming place for everyone?
6. Can you share a memory that highlights when the library was important in your life?
7. How would you be affected if the library didn't exist?

## 1. WHAT WORKS WELL

**“***It's open-spaced, airy. It gives a lift to the town and its a cool space to be in. It's not just about a flash new building, it's the overall vibe. It's a place that belongs to Ōpōtiki.”***”**

Contributors to the survey reported a strong, positive response to the curated experience within Te Tāhuhu o Te Rangi. It is evident from the moment of walking through the door; staff are described as “welcoming”, “friendly” and “knowledgeable”. The space itself is “beautiful”, “clean” and “comfortable”. The collection is “modern” and “well-balanced”. The atmosphere and culture within the library provides a feeling of safety, especially for younger members of the community, “it is doing well by our kids.”

The amenities within the space, e.g., computers and meeting rooms, address shortfalls in accessible services across the community, and staff provide individual support to making these services as easy-to-use as possible.



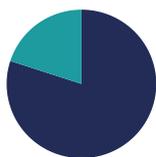


## **THEMES - WHAT WORKS WELL**

### **Te Tāhuhu o Te Rangi exceeds expectations in curation of a community space**

1. Welcoming, knowledgeable, and generous staff
2. A well-curated collection – books, eBooks, reference material
3. Engaging with digital present and future
4. An inviting space – good vibes, artwork, comfort, cleanliness
5. A buzz of activity – events, programs
6. A safe place for our kids
7. Multiple spaces for multiple uses – business and community use

## **NOTES**



80% of respondents used positive emotive language to describe what works in the library. eg.

**“amazing” “gorgeous” “treasure”  
“the best” “superb” “kind”**

## 2. WHAT TO IMPROVE

“A dedicated study space... One place in the library with “shh” for those who need to study.”

By and large, there were very few criticisms of the staff, services or amenities at Te Tāhuhu o Te Rangi. However, there were minor points of friction exhibited between stakeholder needs, e.g., for people who require a quiet library space, media use on the computers or the noisy activities of children could be distracting. However, respondents often provided suggestions to address their concerns, such as provision of a quiet study space.

In terms of additional opportunities requested by survey respondents, the three most frequently supported themes within the responses were: events and activities (including digital readiness), comfort and convenience, and more books.

“I love the books. I love the space. I don't know. More picture books for younger kids. We borrow a lot of these for bedtime.”



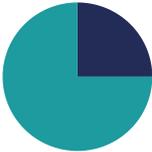


# THEMES - WHAT TO IMPROVE

**What else can we do at Te Tāhuhu o Te Rangi?  
Let's get this party started!**

1. In-person engagement – Events, activities, learning programs
2. Always, more books! – Both in general, and with some very specific suggestions
3. Comfort and convenience – Separate spaces, temperature control, tea and a biscuit
  - a. Accessibility
  - b. Longer opening hours
4. "What's happening?", and "Where do I find it?" – Communication about books, services, events, how to use the space
5. Digital tools and how to use them
6. Staff resourcing and skills
7. Additional services – expanding the library's remit?
8. I can't think of anything!

# NOTES



25% of all comments had no recommendations

**“I can't think of anything you could do better”**

### 3. THE ROLE OF THE LIBRARY IN COMMUNITY

**“***There is always such a variety of people from our community using the library. It's lovely to see everyone in there, from the youngest babes to the oldest kaumātua. Obviously everyone knows it's a real treasure in our community.***”**

Respondents placed Te Tāhuhu o Te Rangi at the centre for activity for the Ōpōtiki community. The library is recognised as a space for a diverse range of users, e.g., old and young, tangata whenua and pākehā, leisure and business users, simultaneously occupying the space for varied purposes. And in its capacity as a hive of activity, the library acts as a facilitator of connections and collaborations. It is a space to learn and be supported, without the risk of judgement. It provides a safe place where you can be without demands, either on your money or your time.



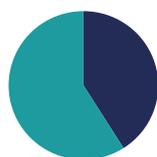


# THEMES - THE ROLE OF THE LIBRARY IN COMMUNITY

**"The library is a large part of the heart of our community": Community pride and place**

1. It's all happening at the library
  - a. Multiple and simultaneous use
  - b. Scarcity of other resources in town
  - c. Community mediation & facilitation
  - d. Making connections
  - e. Community pride
2. A safe place in the world
  - a. An inviting space
  - b. Diverse representation
  - c. A space for young and old alike
  - d. A place without demands
  - e. What does welcoming mean?
3. Building scaffolding - helping people learn
  - a. You need a village to raise a child
  - b. Fostering learners and critical thinkers
  - c. Reducing the digital divide
  - d. Information access
4. The library isn't for everyone

## NOTES



41% of comments highlighted the library's role in providing a safe environment for everyone

## 4. THE PERSONAL IMPACT OF THE LIBRARY

*“It was essential in my job application process. The staff were very supportive and encouraging. And I got the job!”*

Te Tāhuhu o Te Rangi is not a monument for big events. It is, instead, a place filled with everyday small moments. It's those moments that, when bundled together, create a narrative of lives lived day-to-day and week-to-week. It is a place where three generations of whānau come together over the joy of books. It is a place of work meetings, CV writing, and printing of government forms. It is a place where the children of Ōpōtiki congregate to play and make and learn and read.

Respondents describe engagement with Te Tāhuhu o Te Rangi a humanising experience, where they are known by name and are never judged harshly, even when they might not be at their best. It is somewhere to go when you feel sad, or when your baby is three-days overdue and you are waiting for your life to change forever. It's where you go when you're new to town and don't know anyone. It is connection.





# THEMES - THE PERSONAL IMPACT OF THE LIBRARY

**Te Tāhuhu o Te Rangi is part of the weave of everyday life for many in Ōpōtiki**

1. Books make me happy
2. Multi-generational bonding – Children, parents, grandparents
3. Professional development – Job seeking and study support
4. Help with the everyday little things
  - a. Digital support
  - b. Social support
  - c. Mental health support
5. Building connections
6. When I was a kid
7. It's just where I come

## NOTES



33% of respondents described a personal moment that brought them closer to other people

**whānau, friends, new connections**

## 5. WITHOUT THE LIBRARY

**“***The library has a critical role to play in our community, not the least to remind us there is a community here.***”**

Perhaps the most notable response to the hypothetical town-without-a-library scenario is simply that it would be “devastating”. For those people who have the library as central to their life, the absence of the library is akin to losing part of the self. For book readers in particular, if they have the means and funds to travel, they will find their books elsewhere (primarily Whakatāne). But for other people, an absence of the library means an absence of both resources and opportunities in Ōpōtiki.

Without Te Tāhuhu o Te Rangi, there would be few meeting spaces, few digital resources and few places where people congregate, “especially if you don’t drink”. There would be limited resources for young people to engage with across the town, and several schools within Ōpōtiki township have sparse library facilities, further limiting opportunities for the town’s youth. A loss of the library is viewed as a loss for the community.





## THEMES - WITHOUT THE LIBRARY

**Ōpōtiki without a library would be a distressing prospect for many respondents**

1. I'd be lost without books
2. There are few resources in Ōpōtiki
  - a. It would be a loss for our community
  - b. Where would I get my work done?
  - c. Who would help me get online?
  - d. How would I connect with people?
  - e. But where would our kids go?
  - f. I guess I could go to Whakatāne
3. Distress and disappointment

## NOTES

“Every rural or small community deserves to have access to the kind of resources available at Te Tāhuhu o Te Rangi. I think particularly of the children who are using the building and resources, but also older people who benefit from being able to access technology. And so many other things! You have come a loooong way since I first came in 1980, and it would be tragic in many ways to see all that effort wasted. Think always of what the future might look like.”

## CONCLUSION

**TE TĀHUHU O TE RANGI IS A MUCH-LOVED SERVICE THAT RESONATES WITH COMMUNITY**

*“[The library] will support any group that seeks to build bridges between the community, and gently dissuade anyone who seeks division.”*

The results of this survey demonstrate strong support for Te Tāhuhu o Te Rangi. There are no prominent insufficiencies in the services or facilities, and the current community of users is not only content with the space, but consider its success a badge of pride for the community.

The library plays an important role in facilitating and supporting patrons in whatever outcomes they strive to achieve, and the ethos of the team places a high value on embodying manaaki in all its interactions. Te Tāhuhu o Te Rangi is tightly woven into the everyday experience of living in Ōpōtiki, and its absence would be a loss for the town.