Interim report of the Program Evaluation of

Dymocks Children's Charities Book Bank

Student Engagement and Program Evaluation Bureau

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BOOK BANK™

Acknowledgements

Evaluation team

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Executive summary

Program Evaluation of Dymocks Children's Charities *Book Bank*

Dymocks Children's Charities (DCC) developed the *Book Bank* program, which has been piloted with the assistance of the NSW Department of Education and Communities (DEC). The Department's Student Engagement and Program Evaluation Bureau has been commissioned to evaluate the pilot project in five primary schools.

The Terms of Reference required that the evaluation will:

1. Assess the impact of the *Book Bank* program on student reading engagement (how long, how often), including:
   - book choice
   - book ownership
   - book swapping and sharing.
2. Assess the impact of the *Book Bank* program on reading achievement.
3. Review the operation and management of the *Book Bank* at school and in class including:
   - book selection and ordering
   - book distribution and management, including when and how books go home
   - links to class and school programs
   - promotion to wider school community.
4. Assess the impact on the *Book Bank* program of key participants including:
   - the *Book Bank* team
   - students participating in the program
   - school staff and community members
   - ambassadors.
5. Assess the scalability and sustainability of the *Book Bank* program.
6. Assess the effectiveness of the partnership model of Dymocks Children's Charities (DCC) and the NSW Department of Education and Communities (DEC).

The evaluation is being conducted in two phases. Phase 1 covers the period of the development and implementation of the program during 2010-2011. Phase 2 will examine the continuation of the pilot program. The final report will be completed in December 2012.

The *Book Bank* program

The *Book Bank* program promotes student engagement with reading to enhance reading skills. The *Book Bank* model is an initiative of Dymocks Children's Charities working with NSW Department of Education and Communities. Analysis of research on reading engagement, book ownership and reading achievement identified key elements to be included in the model:

- books are chosen by students
- books are provided at no charge, for students to keep
- books are kept at school for the term or semester and can be swapped or borrowed from the class book bank
- students are encouraged to write their opinions of the book on stickers inside the cover

The program employs a team approach to guide the operation of *Book Bank* in schools.

Evaluation methodology

Online surveys for students and teachers were used to gather information about the implementation of the program and impact on student outcomes. Each survey was open to all participants in the program. The teacher survey included both class teachers and school executive staff.

The evaluation team visited the five pilot schools and interviewed groups of students, teachers and parents. Separate interviews were conducted with the school principal and the school *Book Bank* manager and team. Several classrooms were visited at each school to observe *Book Bank* in action.

The methodology was developed in consultation with, and approved by the *Book Bank* Program Evaluation Reference group (PERG).

Summary of key findings

In summary, 87% of students agreed that *Book Bank* has increased their interest in reading books. All teachers surveyed agreed that *Book Bank* had improved their students' attitude to reading and that their students are reading more frequently. Numerous factors relating to the *Book Bank* model and how it operates in the pilot schools contribute to this.

Findings are grouped into four themes that relate directly to the Terms of Reference for the evaluation:
- Student outcomes
- Implementation and management of *Book Bank* in schools
- Sustainability and scalability of the *Book Bank* program
- Effectiveness of the partnership model (between DCC and DEC)

Student outcomes

Survey and interview data indicate that *Book Bank* has generated increased engagement with reading in the first year of implementation. Specific findings include:
- 28 out of 30 teachers surveyed report that students are reading more frequently.
- 87% of students surveyed stated that they are more interested in reading books.
- All teachers surveyed agree that students are enthusiastic about *Book Bank.*
- 29 out of 30 teachers surveyed agree that *Book Bank* contributes to reading skill development.
- Most teachers agreed, both in interviews and through the survey that three key aspects of *Book Bank* support student engagement with reading:
  - students receive books to own and keep
  - students choose their own book
  - students swap books.
- All stakeholders commented that *Book Bank* improved the attitude of many students to reading. The process of book selection and the quality and range of books that were offered created a positive experience for students.
- *Book Bank* blended successfully with the class program and the schools' literacy programs. Swapping and sharing books made reading books a positive social experience. One principal observed that Stage 3 boys who were previously disengaged from reading, were now eager to read their books. Another principal summed up the outcome:

  "The teachers have been talking about the children reading with enthusiasm. [Students] are self-motivated and reading for pleasure."

In interviews, students reported that reading more helped them become better at spelling and learning new words. In the survey, teachers indicated that *Book Bank* challenged students to select more complex and varied reading materials. In interviews, many parents confirmed that *Book Bank* had expanded their child's reading preferences.

Implementation and management of *Book Bank* in schools

The pilot schools were selected by the DEC program manager from schools in the Priority Schools Program[1] (PSP). They range in size from fewer than 100 students in Years K- 6, to over 500. Schools established teams to manage the program, following the guidelines for the program. In semester 2, 2010 the program was launched in each school by an ambassador and students received their first books. Eighty-eight per cent of students in the survey reported that they had chosen their own book and 93% agreed that they enjoyed the book they chose.

Early in the program, some teachers did not allow students to choose their own books. They did not feel confident that students would choose a book that they would be able to read. In some classes, several students chose the same book which reduced the choice available when swapping. Some teachers set a limit on the number of copies of the same title that could be ordered.

Schools varied the way students could access books, despite the program specification that students should take books home to read. Some teachers elected to keep the books at school to avoid loss or damage and to ensure there were enough books for the students to swap during class reading times.

In the student survey, 51% of respondents stated that they took their last book home to keep, while 32% left their book at school in the class book bank. Ten per cent reported that they did not get a book of their own. However, in interviews, all students reported that they had recently received a book of their own to take home and keep.

Students generally participated in the other aspects of *Book Bank* including writing and reading comments on stickers inside the books, and talking about books with friends.

Teachers were satisfied with the management of *Book Bank* at the school level. The catalogue was available to display in colour on an interactive whiteboard or to be printed out for students to browse. One concern was the limited time available for students to make their choices from the wide range of books. In the survey, 77% of students reported that sharing or talking about books with other students helped them choose a book to read.

The distribution of books improved when books were sorted by class, and delivered in one box per class for each term. The workload for a school *Book Bank* manager was estimated to take between two to three hours per term. Two principals confirmed that time was provided from the school budget, to assist school *Book Bank* managers during the ordering period.

Some teachers were concerned that the model failed to accommodate students in Year 2/3 composite classes. However, there were varied responses to the Years 3-6 intentions of the program.

With their classes, teachers primarily used *Book Bank* books during silent reading time. The program also provided opportunities for students to review books and links were sometimes made to literacy homework tasks.

Book Bank ambassadors visited some schools to launch the program and connected to others via a video link. Teachers and parents recalled the occasion enthusiastically. Fewer students remembered the launch by the time of the evaluation visit to schools. Both DCC and DEC program managers also visited

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[1] Schools which serve communities with high concentrations of low socio-economic status families.

schools and spoke to students about the importance of reading. In the student survey, 64% of respondents indicated that they would try and read more books after listening to the visitors.

Sustainability and scalability of the *Book Bank* program

In addition to the positive impact on student reading, all stakeholder groups identified benefits of the *Book Bank* program. Access to quality books in classrooms and the benefit of the injection of new books into homes were confirmed by all groups.

Although these benefits came at no cost to the school community, there was concern that the investment was short term. Schools were willing to continue to provide time for the program but they could not fund the cost of the books.

In 2012, the program expanded to include two additional schools. These are not part of the evaluation. The additional schools have added pressure on DCC to find the space and personnel to complete the book sorting and distribution to all participating schools. The management of book ordering and distribution will need to be reviewed if Book Bank continues to expand, otherwise the scalability of the program is limited.

The program managers may consider providing schools with the *Book Bank* experience for a set period of time, to raise reading engagement levels. Schools may then make decisions about ways they can adapt and apply some aspects of *Book Bank* without the purchase of large numbers of new books.

All teachers surveyed agreed that they would recommend *Book Bank* to another school. Students were asked the same question in interviews and all students recommended *Book Bank*. One student expressed his approval:

> "Basically it's a perfect thing. The only real complaint is that it's not in many schools."

Most parents were pleased that students received new books to keep. However, two parents stated that it was more important to improve the quality of the books in the school library.

Effectiveness of the partnership model

The *Book Bank* program grew from a desire to improve children's literacy across Australia by providing quality books to students and encourage reading for pleasure. Dymocks Children's Charities approached the NSW Department of Education and Communities to discuss options and review similar projects. Research provided some ideas about promoting engagement with reading. These ideas were embedded in a program for students in Years 3-6 and named *Book Bank*.

The DCC program manager initially designed the program, organises the resources and funds for the program, and manages the program's operation. The DEC program manager supports that work and liaises with schools during implementation. The catalogue is created by DCC based on the list of new books prepared annually by the Department for the Premier's Reading Challenge (DEC, 2012).

The partnership was created to develop and implement the program. The bulk of the ongoing work involves management of the program, which is currently the responsibility of DCC. There is ongoing need, however, for the continued involvement of DEC. The contact person supports schools new to the program, and manages emergent issues that are outside the domain of DCC.

Identification of areas of responsibility and establishment of decision-making processes would assist both organisations to cooperate effectively and support the program that is delivering benefits to several DEC schools and their students.

Part 1   Introduction

This evaluation report is presented in two parts:

- Part 1 provides the background to the Dymocks Children's Charities *Book Bank* program evaluation and to the Dymocks Children's Charities *Book Bank* program.
- Part 2 details the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the evaluation.

1. Evaluating Dymocks Children's Charities *Book Bank*

1.1. Background

Book Bank is an initiative of Dymocks Children's Charities (DCC) working with the NSW Department of Education and Communities (DEC). The Student Engagement and Program Evaluation Bureau (SEPEB) has been commissioned to evaluate the pilot program involving five public schools.

The evaluation is being conducted in two phases. Phase 1 covers the period of the development and initial implementation of the program in 2010-2011. Phase 2 will focus on the extension of the pilot program. The final report will be completed in December 2012.

A reference group, comprising representatives of the NSW Department of Education and Communities, Dymocks Children's Charities and the NSW Primary Principals Association (PPA), was formed to provide advice to the evaluation team.

1.2. Purpose of the evaluation

The evaluation was commissioned in November 2010 to identify changes in student reading engagement and achievement that may result from involvement in the Dymocks Children's Charities *Book Bank* program. It will review the program implementation, and investigate the impact of key elements of the program model.

The recommendations will inform decision-making around the expansion of the program to a larger number of schools and the resource requirements for the continuation of the *Book Bank* program in the current pilot schools.

1.3. Audience for the evaluation

The audience for this evaluation includes:

- Director General, NSW Department of Education and Communities (DEC)
- Deputy Director General, Public Schools, DEC
- Managing Director, Dymocks Children's Charities (DCC)
- Director, NSW Curriculum and Learning Innovation Centre (CLIC)
- Board of Dymocks Children's Charities
- Program pilot schools and their communities

1.4. Dymocks Children's Charities *Book Bank* program background

The *Book Bank* program aims to encourage reading for pleasure, and to contribute to improved student reading outcomes. The *Book Bank* model was designed by the program manager from DCC. Analysis of

research on reading engagement, book ownership and reading achievement identified key elements to be included in the program model.

Dymocks Children's Charities funds the purchase and distribution of four books each year per student in Years 3 to 6. Each year Dymocks Children's Charities creates a *Book Bank* catalogue of books which are in print and available. Other resources are provided to facilitate the operation of *Book Bank* at class level, including *Book Bank* wall posters and stickers for the inside cover of each book.

The Department of Education and Communities annually develops the list of books to be included in the Premier's Reading Challenge. Books are reviewed by a panel of experts and allocated to one of four reading levels related to school grade: challenge level K-2, 3-4, 5-6, and 7-9. The lists of new release titles from the PRC are used as the basis of the *Book Bank* catalogues.

A group of five primary schools was invited to trial the *Book Bank* model. The DEC program manager selected the pilot schools. Program managers from both DEC and DCC provided support to the school *Book Bank* teams during early implementation, including coordinating a launch of the program at each school. Initially both program managers visited the pilot schools to view progress and, where necessary, help students select books.

1.5.   Terms of Reference of the Evaluation

The following Terms of Reference have been developed and endorsed by the PERG. The evaluation will:

1. Assess the impact of the *Book Bank* program on student reading engagement (how long, how often), including:
    - book choice
    - book ownership
    - book swapping and sharing.
2. Assess the impact of the *Book Bank* program on reading achievement.
3. Review the operation and management of the *Book Bank* at school and in class including:
    - book selection and ordering
    - book distribution and management, including when and how books go home
    - links to class and school programs
    - promotion to wider school community.
4. Assess the impact on the *Book Bank* program of key participants including:
    - the *Book Bank* team
    - students participating in the program
    - school staff and community members
    - ambassadors.
5. Assess the scalability and sustainability of the *Book Bank* program.
6. Assess the effectiveness of the partnership model of Dymocks Children's Charities and the NSW Department of Education and Communities.

1.6.   Methodology

The evaluation employed a mixed-method approach, drawing on both qualitative and quantitative data, as described in the following sections. Evidence was gathered using:

- surveys of students and school staff (teachers, support staff and principals)
- qualitative investigations in each school through interviews and class observations
- document review e.g. Annual School Reports, *Book Bank* borrowing records and use of book stickers

All pilot schools took part in each of the evaluation activities.

The evaluation is being conducted in two phases, over two school years. The first phase is evaluating the implementation and initial impact of the program. The second phase will examine continued impact sustainability of the *Book Bank* model in the second year of the program.

The methodology was approved by the *Book Bank* Program Evaluation Reference Group (PERG). Each survey, interview and observation schedule was developed in consultation with expert consultants and members of the PERG.

Pilot schools

The five pilot schools, from five regions, were selected from schools in the Priority Schools Program (PSP)[2]. As shown in Table 1.1, the selection represents a range of school sizes and locations including metropolitan, regional and rural. All schools had low levels of participation in the Premier's Reading Challenge (PRC).

Table 1.1: List of pilot schools

School name		Student enrolment	Number of students participating in *Book Bank*	DEC region
Condell Park PS	2010	491	262	South Western Sydney
	2011	545	303	
Ettalong PS	2010	596	348	Hunter Central Coast
	2011	561	321	
Fort Street PS	2010	91	91	Sydney
	2011	89	89	
Nyngan PS	2010	157	99	Western NSW
	2011	150	88	
Toormina PS:	2010	330	230	North Coast
	2011	335	212	

Book Bank was designed for students in Years 3 to 6. In the smallest school, *Book Bank* was implemented from Kindergarten to Year 6. This variation was requested by the principal as the school has only four classes.

1.6.1.   Qualitative component

Qualitative data was collected through visits to schools, interviews with the DCC and DEC program managers, and open-ended questions in surveys.

School visits

Each school visit was conducted by an evaluation officer from the Program Evaluation Unit in the Student Engagement and Program Evaluation Bureau. Each visit included:

- class observations
- interviews with: the principal; students; the school Book Bank manager and team; class teachers; parents
- background document review, including the annual school report.

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[2] Priority Schools Program (PSP) includes schools which serve communities with high concentrations of low socio-economic status families.

Class observations

Class teachers volunteered to take part in class observations of *Book Bank.* The observations provided evidence of the operation of *Book Bank* in classrooms. Use of *Book Bank* resources such as book stickers, bookmarks, shelf poster and borrowing posters were observed. In some classes, there were opportunities for informal sharing with teachers and students. Many teachers discussed their implementation of *Book Bank* and the benefits for their students during the classroom visits.

Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key stakeholders during school visits, as shown in Table 1.2.

Table 1.2: Summary of fieldwork

Methods	No. of interviews	No. of participants
Principal/ school leaders interviews	5	5
School *Book Bank* manager/team interviews	6	11
Student semi-structured interviews	7	47
Teacher interviews	6	17
Parent and community interviews	5	18
Program manager interviews	3	3
TOTAL	**32**	**101**

Principals were invited to select participants for all groups. The interview questions may be found in Appendix 2.

Permission was given by all participants for the interviews to be audio recorded. Audio recordings will be retained by the evaluators for the purpose of accuracy until the evaluation has been completed. All interview data is confidential and no individuals have been identified by name.

Principals
The interview questions were provided to principals in advance of the visit. One interview was conducted by phone as the principal was absent from school on the day of the visit.

Students
Consent forms were obtained from students participating in focus groups. Principals were requested to select six to eight students across Years 3 to 6. In one school, Year 2 students were also interviewed as the program ran K-6. At another school all students who returned permissions forms were keen to participate so two groups were formed.

School *Book Bank* manager
In all schools, the *Book Bank* manager was a member of staff and included two classroom teachers, a teacher- librarian and non-teaching and teaching assistant principals. At two schools, students were members of the *Book Bank* team so they were included in the interview.

Parents
Schools were requested to invite four to eight parents to attend a group interview. Consent to participate was assumed by parents' presence at the interview.

Background document review

Samples of information provided as part of the Dymocks Children's Charities *Book Bank* program during implementation were viewed including a booklet outlining the model, spreadsheets used for ordering and the catalogue of books.

Schools were asked to provide a copy of their most recent Annual School Report containing literacy targets, student achievement data; and any newsletters that included information about their involvement in the *Book Bank* pilot.

Evidence of student participation and engagement through comments made on stickers inside the *Book Bank* books was viewed during the school visits.

Dymocks Children's Charities provides information about The *Book Bank* Program on its website. This includes the scope of the pilot program and the focus on students choosing books that become their own.

Interviews with *Book Bank* program managers

The program manager for Dymocks Children's Charities and the DEC program manager were interviewed separately.

Surveys

The teacher survey had two open-ended questions asking about their students' enthusiasm for reading books from *Book Bank* and additional comments not addressed by the survey questions. Responses were consolidated with the interview data. Four school *Book Bank* managers completed the teacher survey and their responses have been aggregated with the teachers.

The student survey had two open-ended questions. This provided opportunities for students to use their own words to comment on the *Book Bank* sticker and *Book Bank* activities at school.

1.6.2. Quantitative component

The quantitative component of the evaluation comprised of surveys for teachers and students. Technical support for online access and data collection was provided by Educational Measurement and School Accountability Directorate (EMSAD) in DEC. Before release, both surveys were piloted in one of the *Book Bank* pilot schools.

Teacher online survey

All teachers and principals in the pilot schools were invited to complete the teacher survey. A link to the survey was sent by email to all principals and school *Book Bank* managers for dissemination. Thirty surveys were received, representing approximately 25% of teaching and executive staff in the pilot schools, as shown in Figure 1.1. Teachers from all stage groups were represented. One respondent in a non-teaching executive position did not use *Book Bank* in the classroom.

The breakdown of respondents by the stage of students taught is shown in Figure 1.2 The largest proportion of respondents comes from Stages 2 and 3 (Years 3 to 6). Most K - 2 teachers have had little contact with *Book Bank* program because it was generally implemented for Years 3 to 6.

Figure 1.1: Teacher survey: Respondents by school

Q1.1 Teacher respondents by school

n=30
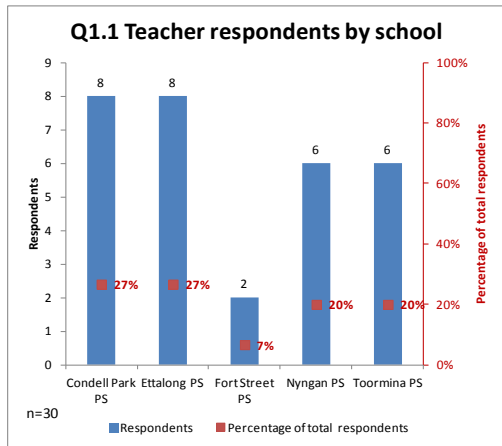
Figure 1.2: Teacher survey: Respondents by stages

Q1.4 Teaching Stages

Number of respondents

Stage	
Stage 1/2	4
Stage 2	9
Stage 2/3	1
Stage 3	13
OTHER	3

n=30
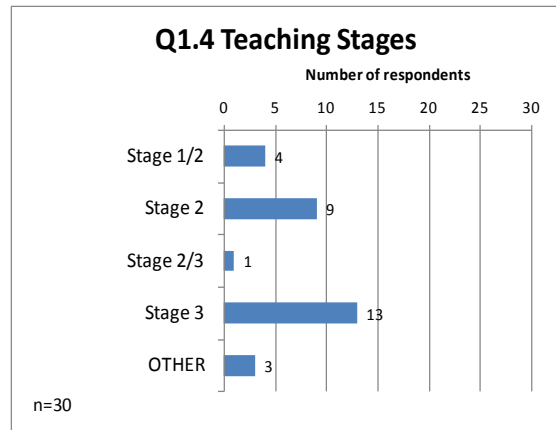
Student online survey

All students in Years 3 to 6 in the pilot schools were invited to complete the survey. At one school, Year 2 students were also invited to participate, as they were involved in *Book Bank*. A link to the survey was sent by email to principals.

A total of 517 survey responses were received. Figure 1.3 shows the distribution of responses across the five schools. 48% of respondents were boys and 52% were girls.

Figure 1.3: Student survey: Respondents by school

Q1.1 Student respondents by school

n=517
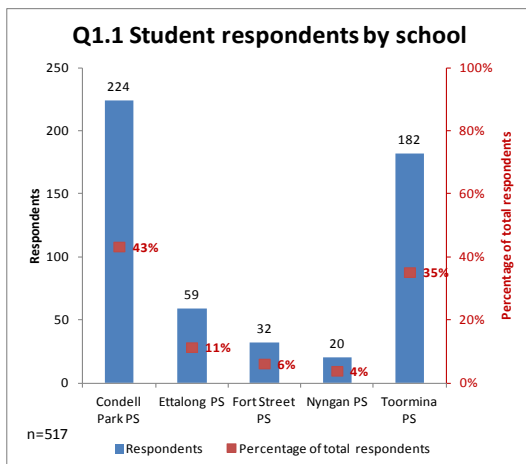
Figure 1.4: Year of schooling of respondents

Q1.2 Year of respondent

n=517
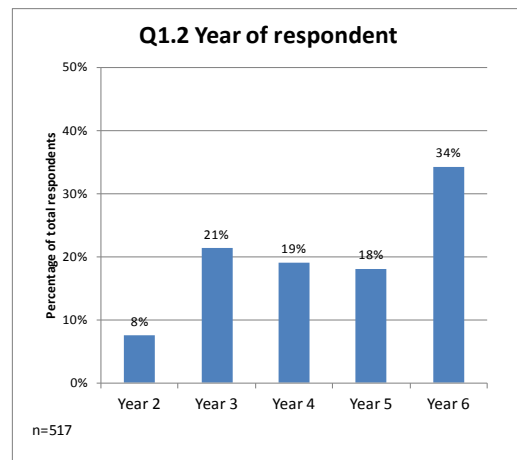
Figure 1.4 shows the distribution of student respondents by year level.

NAPLAN reading assessment data

The *Book Bank* program commenced in schools in Semester 2, 2010. It is too early to attempt to draw any conclusions about reading achievement from NAPLAN data for 2011.

1.6.3. Data recording and analysis

A total of 32 interviews and focus group sessions were recorded using both audio recording and note taking. Field notes and recordings were consolidated into a single record for each interview, which was quality reviewed before analysis commenced.

Systematic coding commenced with an initial set of categories generated from the Terms of Reference and the background document review. Original categories were expanded and refined based on

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common issues and themes emerging from participants' responses. Counter-examples were sought, with recognition given to dissenting opinions.

The text responses to the teacher survey were included in the consolidated data set for the program. The consolidated data amounted to 1691 individual thematic records. This material has been used to provide the qualitative evidence used in the evaluation.

1.6.4. Limitations of the methodology

The design of the evaluation was limited by a number of issues that had the potential to impact on the data obtained:

- Student respondents to the survey are young readers.
- School principals selected both teacher and student interview participants.
- The ability to measure change relied on stakeholder perceptions, as no baseline data was collected prior to the start of the program.
- As a substantial resource had been provided to the school communities, through the donation of new books, there was a strong sense of 'owing' the program favourable comments.
- Measures of reading achievement were primarily based on teacher judgement.
- Multiple variables were in operation in each school, including variation in implementation of the program at class and school level.

There are limitations in surveying younger children. While the surveys were conducted at school online and in groups, supervised by teachers, younger students may not always give an accurate response. Their reading skills are developing and the survey format is unfamiliar to most. Surveys do provide an opportunity to collect data from a larger sample and this data is valuable. Survey data is presented together with data from student interviews in this report.

1.6.5. Attribution

A challenge exists in attributing changes in student learning outcomes to *Book Bank* alone, and in isolating any effect of the program from other influences in classrooms and schools.

The evaluation of Dymocks Children's Charities *Book Bank* was implemented in only five schools in five DEC regions. Each pilot school is distinctly different, with variation in teacher pedagogy, availability of extra support for reading, and provision of specific interventions. Each student's attitudes to and experience of reading, are also unique.

1.6.6. Recommendations for Phase 2 methodology

The findings from Phase 1 have generated specific themes which may be explored in Phase 2, to determine the strength of their effect on the program and students. The change to the end date of the pilot (from July 2012 to December 2012) provides the opportunity to examine the variation in implementation across the schools, as the program has become established and familiar.

Phase 2 data will assist in providing information about the sustainability of both the program itself, and the impacts observed in year 1, and the possible implementation in subsequent schools.

1.7. Presentation of the evaluation findings

Part 1 Section 2 provides an overview of *Book Bank*, including its goals, major features and details of the program pilot. Part 2 of the report presents evaluation findings in the following sections:

Section 3: Student outcomes

Section 4: Implementation and management of *Book Bank* in schools

Section 5: Sustainability and scalability of the model

Section 6: Effectiveness of the partnership

Section 7: Summary of the findings and conclusions

Section 8: Preliminary recommendations
The student and teacher survey results, and interview and observation schedules are included in two appendices.

In Appendix 1, the summary of student responses to questions has used percentages of total respondents to facilitate comparisons and conclusions. The sample (517 students) was large enough to be representative of all students in DCC *Book Bank* schools.

However, the teacher survey had 30 respondents only, which limits its capacity to support generalisations and conclusions about the teachers in *Book Bank* schools as a group. The teacher survey responses are presented as numbers of respondents rather than percentages of total respondents, in order to reduce the risk of invalid generalisations being made from the sample.

Appendix 2 presents the qualitative evaluation schedules used in school visits.

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2. Dymocks Children's Charities *Book Bank* program

2.1. Aim

Book Bank aims to *"encourage reading for pleasure, contribute to improved student reading outcomes and complement the Premier's Reading Challenge."* (Dymocks Children's Charities, 2009b)

Book Bank is designed for students in Years 3 to 6. In these years of schooling, students are becoming more independent in their reading and may choose to read more challenging texts.

2.2. Background

The Dymocks Children's Charities (DCC) is an Australia-wide, tax-deductible charity. The DCC's mission is to raise funds and support children's literacy through literacy projects involving quality reading resources.

In 2009 two DCC Board members held preliminary discussions with senior officers of the NSW Department of Education and Communities (DEC) to discuss ways in which the charity might be able to assist students from disadvantaged schools. The DCC's community-based Mingara project (Dymocks Children's Charities, n.d.) was cited as an example.

In December 2009 the Dymocks Children's Charities (DCC) newly appointed Managing Director, Jacquie Stratford sought to identify a cost effective strategy that would encourage reading for pleasure. Following discussions with DEC senior the *Book Bank* project was developed for primary students.

The development of the program was inspired by the following quote from the Honourable Bob Carr (then) Premier and founder of the Premier's reading Challenge:

> *"…for all the Reading Challenge's success, I remind myself that there are still thousands of kids for whom reading never really becomes a part of their mental equipment; it never becomes a pleasure.'*

DCC *Book Bank* pilot study was implemented in five priority schools across the state, commencing in July 2010.

The *Book Bank* program draws upon the following international and local experience of effective conditions for reading success, including:

- regular reading at school and home (reading activity)
- student choice of reading material (student choice)
- student engagement and perceptions about reading (attitudes).

Book Bank is financed by donations to DCC, and delivery of the program is free to the pilot schools.

2.2.1. Similar programs promoting reading for pleasure

There are numerous programs which promote reading success in different ways. Some are based on a user-pays system, some are embedded in the practices of the school, and some operate outside the school, targeting specific communities to address perceived reading deficits.

Mingara Recreation Club and Dymocks Children's Charities have been working together since 2006 to resource reading projects in schools on the NSW Central Coast. In 2010 the program provided a book to

keep for every student in Kindergarten and Year 1 at the partner schools. Titles were selected from the Premier's Reading Challenge new releases list.

Holiday Reading is Rad (DEC, 2010, 2012) is a state level DEC initiative of the Priority Schools Program (PSP), designed for students from low-SES communities. The aim of the program is to encourage adults to read with children each day of the school holidays, to prevent 'summer fall-off' in reading skills. It provides children's magazines and a reading diary as well as other promotional material. Teachers assess students' reading using a special-purpose inventory. There is no cost to students or schools.

Books in Homes (2012) is an Australian registered charity. In schools that register for the primary program students receive nine new books per year, for a fee. In 2012, the fee was $78.27 per student. Students choose from 12 books in each reading level. *Books in Homes* provides materials and activities to promote reading, such as competitions, book bags, certificates and stickers.

The New Zealand-based *Books in Hands* project (Books in Hands, n.d.) collects new and pre-loved books in for distribution to children in the Solomon Islands. The books are used for both educational and recreational purposes.

2.2.2. Research supporting the *Book Bank* model

Teaching reading focuses on the acquisition of a range of component skills and as well as students learning about how texts are constructed. In Years 3 to 6 texts become longer and the vocabulary is more challenging. Students who read regularly, develop their reading skills and fluency.

The *Book Bank* program focuses on two key elements: providing quality books for students to keep and read for pleasure, at no charge. Program managers for DCC and DEC reviewed research to shape their ideas about how the program could do more than just provide free books for school children.

Engagement

Research by John T. Guthrie (2001) provides a description of engaged reading:

> *"Engaged reading is a merger of motivation and thoughtfulness. Engaged readers seek to understand; they enjoy learning and they believe in their reading abilities. They are mastery oriented, intrinsically motivated, and have self-efficacy."* (p. 1)

Book Bank is designed to promote engagement with reading by giving books to students to read, share and take home to keep.

Sharing

Guthrie's (2001) *"Engagement Model of Reading Development"* is a combination of various theories and research findings. The model identifies 'collaboration' as an instructional priority for promoting reading development. Teachers who engage with *Book Bank* in the classroom encourage students to talk informally about the books they have read (or 'share') with their friends. This helps students choose books to read. *Book Bank* provides stickers so students can record their comments after reading and give feedback to help other students choose a book to read.

Book ownership

Book ownership and reading level are related according to the findings of a study by the National Literacy Trust in the United Kingdom (Clark, Woodley, & Lewis, 2011). The study compared the reading attainment of 5,580 students aged nine to fourteen. They divided the students into three groups according to reading ability: below expected level, at expected level and above expected level. Of the

students who had no books of their own, 64% read at or below the expected level; compared to 45% of students who did have books of their own.

Book ownership facilitates multiple readings of a book, unlike books that are borrowed for a set period. Horst, Parsons, & Bryan's (2011) research with 16 three-year-old children, investigated the effect on word acquisition of repeated exposure to a story book. The study demonstrated the difference between reading many books and many readings of the same book. Students recognised new words after encountering them in the same context through successive readings of a single story. Children who had three different stories read to them, with the same new words, failed to learn any of the new words.

Book choice

Turner and Paris (1995) discuss the importance of student choice as a *"powerful motivator"* (page 664). This applies to both tasks and texts. They referred to the work of Schiefele (1991) who found that when students choose books based on their own interest, they try harder to understand the text.

Turner and Paris commented that choice also encourages wider reading as a result of browsing to make a selection.

Book Bank provides students with book catalogues that include fiction and non-fiction titles grouped in levels that link to learning stages from Early Stage 1 to Stage 4. There is an extensive range of books in each catalogue. In semester 2, 2011 the catalogues listed a total of 313 titles.

Teachers assist students in the selection of their *Book Bank* books. Guthrie (2001) commented that *"teachers create contexts for engagement when they provide meaningful choices about what, when, and how to read, and interesting texts that are familiar, vivid, important, and relevant." S*tudents are encouraged to read their *Book Bank* books and to choose other *Book Bank* books to read at school and at home.

Reading for enjoyment

Thomson et al. (2011) reviewed the results of the 2009 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) that assessed the reading literacy of a sample of 15 year-old Australian school students. Students' enjoyment of reading was strongly linked to their reading performance. However, one third of the students who participated reported that they did not read for enjoyment.

Reading for enjoyment is the foundation of the *Book Bank* model. *Book Bank* provides books for students to read for pleasure within the school setting. Books may be taken home to read and swapped when finished. This provides an expanded supply of books in each class.

2.3. Features of *Book Bank*

Dymocks Children's Charities *Book Bank* was developed to trial a combination of features thought to promote engagement with reading. The model works on three levels:

- books are provided at no charge, are chosen and owned by students
- the program is linked to the social environment of school, with support from teaching professionals
- participation is optional; there is no pressure on students to participate and no formal assessment of their reading is required at any stage.

2.3.1. Provision of books

The *Book Bank* pilot intends to give every student in Years 3 to 6 in each school, one book per term for a period of two school years (eight terms).

The *Book Bank* comprises the following key features:
- Students choose two books prior to the beginning of a semester (one for each term) from one of four age-graded catalogues.
- The school-based *Book Bank* team assists students with book selection, ordering and distribution.
- Books are available at school during the term, to be read and swapped with others.
- An additional five books are provided each term to add to each class' book bank, to enable additional swapping opportunities
- Students take their books home to keep at the end of the term or semester.
- Posters and book stickers are provided to support swapping and sharing.

Catalogue

Book Bank enables students to select from four catalogues graded according to stage: K-2, Stage 2 (Years 3 & 4), Stage 3 (Years 5 & 6) and Stage 4 (Years 7 & 8).

The DCC program manager decided to base the catalogue on the latest releases included in the Premier's Reading Challenge booklists. The book list is compiled by DEC and is sent to DCC in October each year. The *Book Bank* catalogue includes only books that are available in reasonable numbers.

There are four catalogues which match the levels used by the Premier's Reading Challenge. Each catalogue is organised alphabetically by title, and includes an image of the cover and a brief description of each book. They are identified using only letters A: D. Table 2.1 shows the number of books students could choose from for each semester.

Table 2.1: Numbers of books offered to students per semester (Source: Dymocks Children's Charities)

BOOK BANK: number of books offered to students					
Grade:	K-2	3-4	5-6	7-9	TOTAL
Terms 3 & 4, 2010	82	122	186	51	441
Terms 1 & 2, 2011	53	99	86	89	327
Terms 3 & 4, 2011	51	91	89	82	313
Terms 1 & 2, 2012	93	91	130	77	391

Ordering

Book orders are completed twice a year, prior to the beginning of a new semester. Each school receives a spreadsheet of the new catalogue titles to facilitate ordering.

Students select two books at a time, each semester. In some schools, senior students were able to enter their own choice into the spreadsheet supplied by the DCC program manager. The school *Book Bank* managers collate the orders submitted by class teachers, and forward them to Dymocks Children's Charities for processing.

2.3.2. Social environment

Book Bank books are seen as distinct from books borrowed from libraries in general; both in the fact they are owned by students rather than by the school; and in the way the books are swapped and shared within the classroom, between peers.

Swapping and sharing

Schools are encouraged to facilitate student engagement with reading by promoting the swapping of *Book Bank* books with classmates, and encouraging sharing sessions between students.

The program suggests that books should be kept in the classroom and made available for reading and swapping during the school term. *Book Bank* books may be taken home to read, and returned and swapped. Each class receives five extra books each term to maintain a reasonable range of choice for swapping.

Support materials include a *Book Bank* borrowing poster and book stickers for use in swapping books. Students' fabric *Book Bank* bag are designed to promote care of books when they taken home to read.

Book Bank stickers

Students are encouraged to write a comment on the sticker located in the front of each book. Stickers can guide peers when making their reading selections or when ordering a book of their own.

2.4. Implementing the pilot

The five pilot schools were selected from a short list of schools supplied by the Priority Schools team at DEC. Principals received a letter from the DEC confirming their acceptance into the pilot and providing details of the program. As part of their participation in the *Book Bank* schools were expected to:

- nominate and support school *Book Bank* managers (two or more senior students)
- form a small organisational team consisting of a parent or community member and a school staff member (teacher, teacher-librarian or member of school executive)
- ensure students become active participants in all aspects of the program, from book choice, to swapping and sharing
- plan and implement activities involving their communities, other schools and the Dymocks Children's Charities Ambassadors, in which the program is promoted, books are presented and student reading is recognised and rewarded
- participate in the evaluation to measure the impact of the pilot.

Each school was provided with information about the processes of ordering and distribution of books, and support for class activities.

2.4.1. *Book Bank* teams in schools

Schools were asked to form a 'small organisational team' consisting of senior students, a school staff member and parent or community member. An outline of the various roles was provided in the *Book Bank* information booklet (Stratford, 2010).

It was intended that selected senior students would be responsible for management of the program, including promotion across the school community, helping other students select books, book ordering and distribution. They were to be involved in events such as the launch of *Book Bank*. It was envisaged that the role would contribute to the development of student leadership skills. According to the DEC program manager, the inclusion of students needed to be a school focus:

> *"You needed a teacher who was really committed to giving those students leadership opportunities."*

Student *Book Bank* team members were to be supported by a teacher contact person and a member of the school community, who would be responsible for communication within their area of influence.

2.4.2. Funding

The DCC Program manager actively sources funds for the books through grant applications, corporate sponsorship and fundraising activities. Funding for the pilot program aligns with the objectives of DCC which include "*helping kids in need*" (Dymocks Children's Charities, 2009a).

At the annual fundraising event for 2012, Dymocks Children's Charities offered potential sponsors a package valued at $10,000, which would provide books through the *Book Bank* program to eligible schools with up to 200 students enrolled in Years 3 to 6.

The DEC supports the *Book Bank* program in two ways:
- a DEC officer fulfils the role of program manager as part of their role in supporting curriculum in NSW schools
- pilot schools contribute time and resources to ensure the program runs smoothly.

DEC is also funding the evaluation of the pilot program.

2.4.3. Launching the *Book Bank*

A community event is used to launch *Book Bank* in each school. Dymocks Children's Charities enlisted 'ambassadors' to help launch the program and encourage students to read. One ambassador handed out autographed bookmarks printed with a reminder about the importance of reading: "*Reading makes you smart.*"

Two school communities used video conference facilities to enable an ambassador to launch the program.

In some cases, media attended the launch and the event was publicised in local newspapers.

Part 2   Evaluation findings

This section presents the findings of Phase 1 of the program evaluation, organised in terms of areas identified in the evaluation, the Terms of Reference, and in response to issues that emerged through data collection.

It is acknowledged that the data has been drawn from a small number of schools. Data was sought from six diverse stakeholder groups, in each school: students; teachers; school *Book Bank* manager and team; principals; parents or community members; and the program managers from Dymocks Children's Charities (DCC) and the NSW Department of Education and Communities (DEC).

There are interrelationships between many of the themes generated from the data. For this reason, the evaluation findings include themes that were common across groups, even when the data set for these is small.

3. Student outcomes

Both the survey and interview data collected from all stakeholders indicated that *Book Bank* generated increased student interest in reading. This was attributed to the design of the program and factors such as recording comments on a sticker inside each book and the notion that the books were gifts. One school *Book Bank* manager stated,

> *"The benefits have been amazing - seeing how enthusiastic [students] have been about silent reading. They are all so nose-deep in their books because it is something they have chosen for themselves."*
>
> -

The design of *Book Bank* is based on three key ideas:

- student choice of book
- student book ownership
- social interaction facilitated by students swapping and sharing books.

All stakeholders were asked about the impact of these ideas on student reading engagement and reading achievement. The findings around these and other factors are presented below.

3.1. Student engagement

Book Bank is designed to increase engagement with reading among primary school students, through the provision of quality books that the students choose and keep as their own.

Findings related to enhanced student engagement with reading are set out in the following two sections:

- demonstrations of enhanced student engagement with reading
- discussion of the features of the *Book Bank* model that contribute to enhanced engagement.

3.1.1. Enhanced student engagement with reading

Engagement is demonstrated by:

- interest and enjoyment in reading
- student enthusiasm for *Book Bank* sessions, or the arrival of new books
- frequency of reading [*Book Bank*] books
- sustained focus on reading (reading for longer periods).

Interest and enjoyment

Both in the student survey and during interviews, almost all students indicated that they had enjoyed reading the books from *Book Bank*. This was summed up by one student who said that, "*Book Bank means: read for fun*."

Increased enjoyment was strongly reported through teacher interviews and in the results of the teacher survey. As shown in Figure 3.1, 100% of teachers reported that students' attitudes to reading have improved since the introduction of *Book Bank*. Similarly, 76% of teachers reported an increase in student self-initiated reading for pleasure.

Figure 3.1: Teacher survey: Improvement in attitude to reading
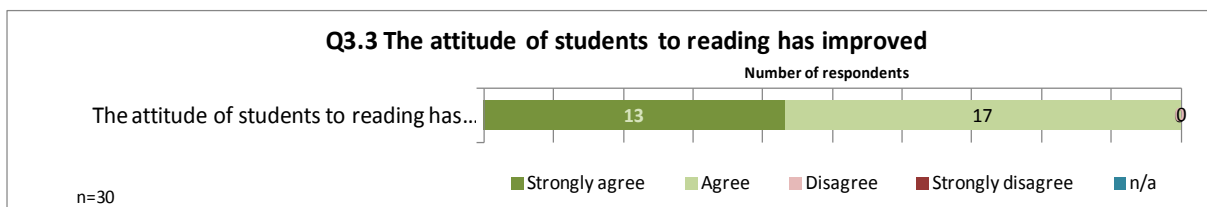
Figure 3.2: Student survey: Impact of the program on reading interest
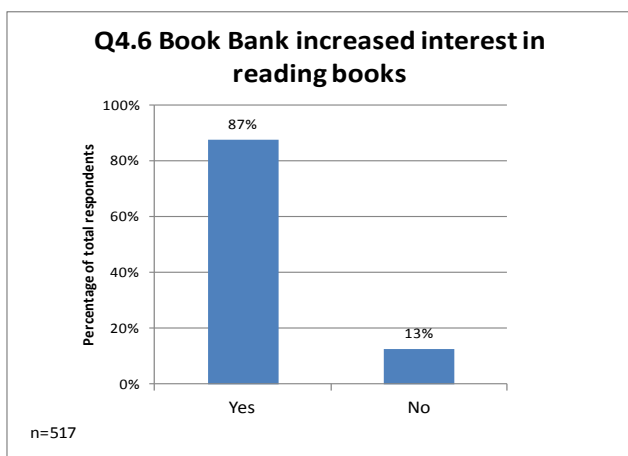
Figure 3.2 shows that 87% of the students reported that *Book Bank* had increased their interest in reading.

In Figure 3.3 students' responses are shown by learning stage, with similar rates of increased interest reported by all groups of students.

Figure 3.3: Student survey: Impact of the program on reading interest by stage
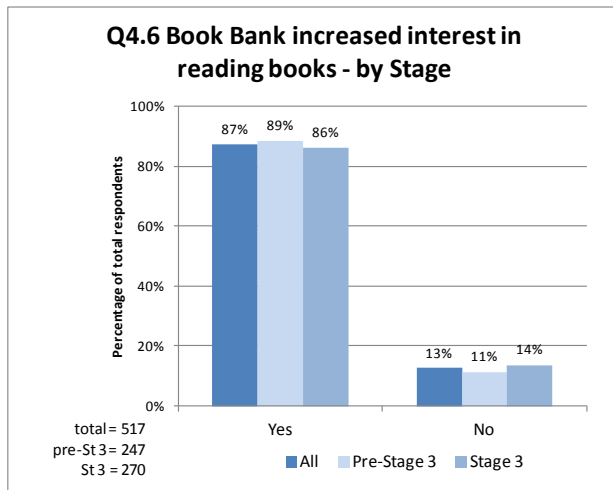
All interviewed principals gave examples of the positive impact of *Book Bank* on reading behaviours. They observed that *Book Bank* fostered reading as a form of recreation and that it added to "*that fabric of richness*" around reading in the school.

When interviewed, most parents reported an increase in reading engagement attributed to their child receiving books from *Book Bank*. They commented on their children's enthusiasm about reading their books at home. One parent commented:

> "My boy's attitude has changed altogether because now he picks up novels and reads them cover to cover without me sitting over [him]."

Student enthusiasm

School *Book Bank* managers and the students involved in assisting the program viewed *Book Bank* as motivating and a way of encouraging students to read.

All teachers in the survey agreed that their students showed enthusiasm for reading books from *Book Bank*, as shown in Figure 3.4. In interviews, several teachers described the strong sense of anticipation shown by students about the arrival of the next book.

Figure 3.4: Teacher survey: Student enthusiasm about *Book Bank*
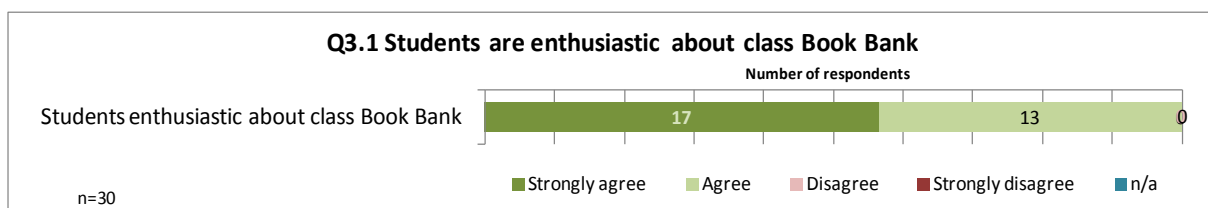
In the teacher survey 23 out of 30 teachers responded that students demonstrated increased self-initiated reading for pleasure. See Figure 3.12. They reported that students are increasingly seeking opportunities to read in class: when they have finished their work, during silent reading time and, according to one teacher, "*whenever they get the chance.*" For some students this was a new effect.

In all classes observed by the evaluation team, there was a high level of engagement with reading books from *Book Bank*. Enthusiasm was not limited to books the students chose for themselves, but included books that other students enjoyed and recommended.

Some parents and teachers talked about students who enjoyed reading and read frequently before the *Book Bank* program was introduced. These students enjoyed *Book Bank* because it provided further opportunities to read.

In contrast to these very positive responses, there remained some students for whom the program made little if any difference. One parent described her son's limited engagement with books, caused by the difficulty he had in sitting still and reading, including books from *Book Bank*.

Reading frequency

Increased engagement can be demonstrated by an increase in how frequently students are reading. In the teacher survey almost all teachers agreed that students read more frequently since *Book Bank* was introduced. This included books from all sources, as shown in Figure 3.5.

Figure 3.5: Teacher survey: Student reading frequency
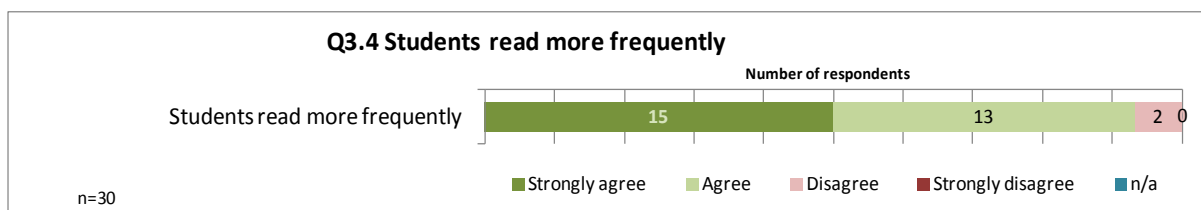
Principals recounted seeing a definite increase in students reading in the playground before school. Students also commented that they are reading more frequently, with one suggesting: "*You get used to reading!".* All interviewed parents agreed that their children are reading more.

A school *Book Bank* manager and a teacher suggested that one reason for the increase in reading frequency may be the popularity of books that are part of a series.

In the survey, students were asked to identify when they read their *Book Bank* book. As can be seen in Figure 3.6, 83% of students reported that they read their book at school in class time. Students also read their books outside school hours, with nearly a quarter of students selecting *"after school"* and more than a quarter saying they read at night.

Figure 3.6: Student survey: Times when *Book Bank* books are read
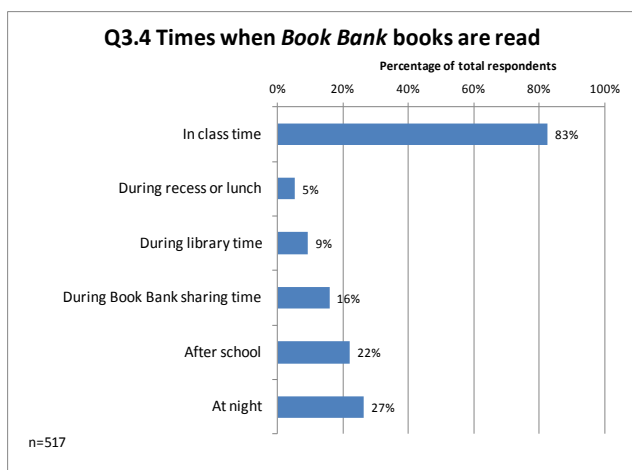
One student interviewed commented:

> *"Book Bank encourages us and helps us. Ever since Book Bank started I have been reading more each day after dinner and at bedtime, as well as in the car."*

Sustained focus on reading

In interviews, teachers also remarked on improved participation in class literacy activities such as writing book reviews, talking about authors and silent reading time. Parents commented about the way their children's reading habits have changed. One parent said that *Book Bank* encourages (children) to have a wider interest in things. Another parent remarked:

> *"Now she is an avid reader. Now I can't talk to her because she tells me to let her read."*

3.1.2. Features of the *Book Bank* model that contribute to enhanced engagement

In accordance with Term of Reference 1, the evaluation has sought to determine how the following key features of the program have contributed to enhanced student engagement with reading:

- book choice
- book ownership
- book swapping and sharing.

Respondents to the teacher survey rated these features as the major strengths of the *Book Bank* program, as shown in Figure 3.7.

Figure 3.7: Teacher survey: Strengths of the *Book Bank* program

Q2.11 Strengths of Book Bank

Number of respondents

Students receive four books per year to read and take home to keep.	27
Students choose their own book.	26
Books are shared within the class.	24
Students read books on the list for the Premier's Reading Challenge.	22
Students talk about their books with their classmates.	22
Students can write comments about books on the sticker inside each book.	15
The program has been promoted by popular identities.	9
n/a.	1

n=30

Student book choice

All stakeholders talked about the excitement and enthusiasm students showed when choosing their books. More than a third of comments in the teacher survey emphasised the value of student choice. Several teachers commented in interviews, that students choosing their own books led to a greater commitment to read. One teacher commented that *Book Bank* enabled students to choose *"outside the square."*

In some cases, especially early on in the program, teachers did not allow students to choose their own books, as discussed in section 4.1.3.

Many interviewed students were confident that they would like reading their book because they chose it. Students were able to articulate the types of books and authors that they liked, and what was popular

in their class or grade. However, one participant recognised that it was possible to make a 'wrong choice'. He was quick to add that it wasn't a problem because:

> "…if you don't like your choice, you can read another book [from Book Bank]."

At one school, a teacher described the way some students worked together when selecting their books, organising themselves to choose a range of titles that they were all interested in. In this way, they were all able to read more than one book of their choice, each term. The teacher described the process:

> "In my class there are friendship groups among the boys. They organise what books to order so over the term they all get to read the books they wanted."

As shown in Figure 3.8, survey responses indicate that the majority of students (58%) chose books that were about topics that interested them. Only 5% of students chose a book because it was recommended by a teacher and 10% chose a book when it was recommended by a friend. Recommendations were not as important as features of the book such as the cover or author, or the catalogue description.

Figure 3.8: Student survey: Reasons for book choice

Q2.5 Reasons for choosing the book

Percentage of total respondents

Because it was about a topic that interests me	58%
Because I liked the description from the list	25%
Because it had pictures	15%
Because my friends recommended it	10%
Because a teacher recommended it	5%
Because I liked the picture on the cover	28%
Because I knew I could read it without help	24%
Because it was written by an author I liked	22%

n=517

Most students reported enjoying the book they chose, as shown in Figure 3.9 (facing). The link between liking a book and liking reading was expressed by one student:

> "I think not many people in my class really liked reading before Book Bank but they've become a bit more interested because they got the book they liked."

The DEC program manager said teachers had given feedback about the way students' choices surprised them. *Book Bank* was seen to help teachers know what students are interested in reading. A school *Book Bank* manager put it this way:

> "It's given teachers a broader idea of what sorts of interests their kids have got."

Most teachers surveyed rated student book choice highly. It was second only, but almost equal to, the fact that students receive four books a year to keep (see Figure 3.7).

In interviews, all parents identified student book choice as an important element in encouraging their children to read. Many were aware that their children were promoting reading amongst themselves by talking about their books both at school and at home. One parent commented:

> *"It's important that someone likes the book they have chosen."*

Figure 3.9: Student survey: Enjoyment of book from *Book Bank*

Q2.2 Enjoyment of the book received from Book Bank
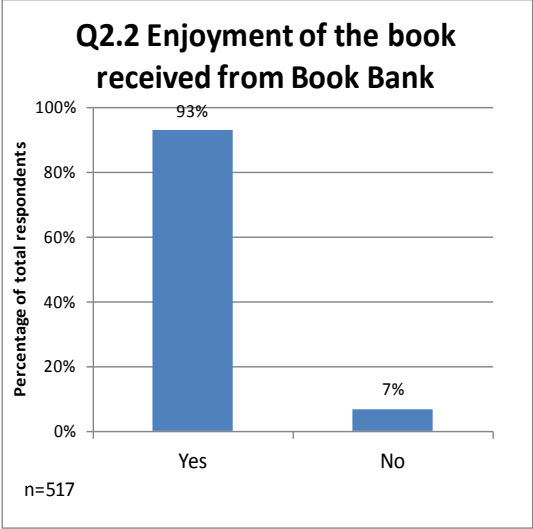
A few parents expressed some concern that their child didn't find a book they really liked or chose a book that was too easy. The DEC program manager recalled one student who was dissatisfied because the teacher had chosen the book:

> *"I remember a situation where a teacher had chosen a boring, low level book and the student wasn't interested (in reading it)."*

Across all the interviews there were only positive comments about the variety of books chosen by students. The catalogue offered new authors and books that were different to class texts. One student stated that *Book Bank* offered books *"you wouldn't normally find in a library."*

One parent explained that *Book Bank* made a difference not only by increasing the time her daughter spent reading, but that she now reads *"different books"*. Across the interviews, parents, teachers and principals were all pleased that *Book Bank* was broadening students' reading preferences.

Book ownership

Teachers identified lack of access to books as a barrier to engagement with reading. They viewed the provision of 'books for students to keep' as an important part of the program, as demonstrated in Figure 3.10.

Figure 3.10: Teacher survey: Ownership of books is important

Q2.8 Ownership of books is an important part of Book Bank.
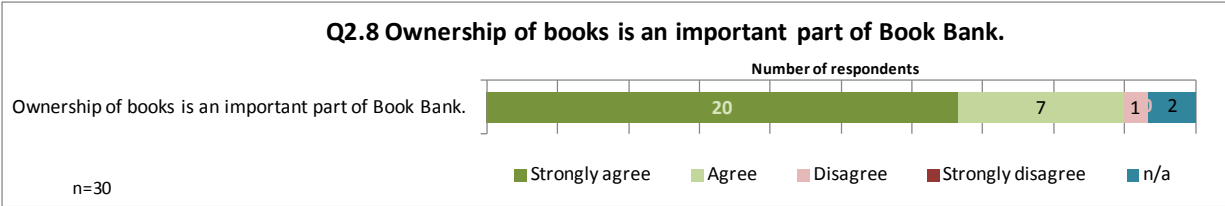
Eight books will be given to each student over the two-year pilot period, assisting students to build their own library of books at home. All parents and students interviewed spoke about how *Book Bank* books

were stored in set places at home, most commonly in the child's own room. For some students this was a new experience.

Groups of parents and teachers each made comments about how owning the books, and having them at home, provides opportunities for students to read whenever they choose and, in their opinion, this is increasing reading engagement.

Many teachers commented on students' very positive attitudes to their books and how ownership makes them choose carefully and handle the books with care. One parent described this behaviour as *"that treasuring of books"*. For this reason, some students worried about their new book being damaged and found it difficult to share.

According to one school *Book Bank* manager:

> *"It's just been fantastic especially for those lower SES kids. It's been such an absolute gift, the way they care for them. They are so protective of their books."*

The DEC program manager views ownership and reading enjoyment as linked, and expressed concern about the effect that ending the pilot program as planned in mid-2012, may have on reading engagement.

Most parents were appreciative that students receive books to keep. Another group of parents discussed the benefits of *Book Bank* giving students access to additional books for the Premier's Reading Challenge.

Student survey results shown in Figure 3.11 indicate that only 51% of students took their last book home to keep, and 32% left theirs at school in the book bank. 10% reported that they did not get a book of their own. However, responses in the interviews were quite different. All students reported that they had recently received a book of their own.

Figure 3.11: Student survey: Books taken home to keep
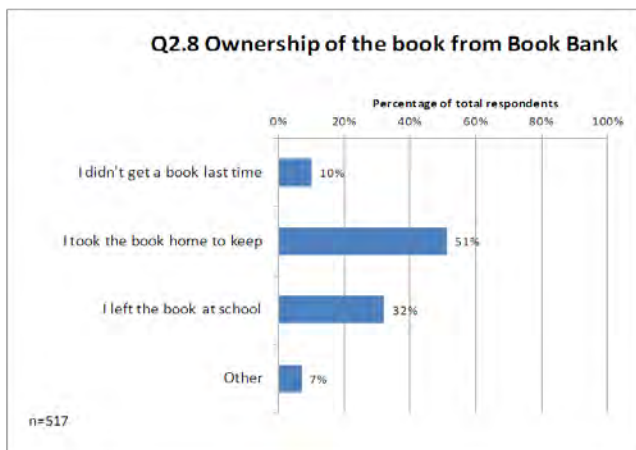
Features of *Book Bank* books

Three particular features of the books emerged as important, across the pilot schools:

- *New books:* the experience of receiving a new book was unusual for many students. According to teachers, the fact that the books were new, and often new releases, increased their value to the students and motivated students to read them.

- *Quality books*: parents were impressed that *Book Bank* was providing *"good books"*, just as teachers appreciated the quality of the books available in the catalogue. According to one principal, students are excited about receiving quality literature:

  "To have quality literature going into their classrooms that they are excited about is totally different."

- *The gift of a book*: students were aware that the books provided by *Book Bank* were free. There was excitement at receiving each book because it was viewed as a gift.

One teacher commented on this generosity in the open response at the end of the survey:

  "Children are excited to be choosing their own text and at the generosity of the program - amazing engagement levels."

Class activities

Teachers have used *Book Bank* books for literacy groups, writing book reviews, talking about authors, and for homework activities. Class observations and discussion in teacher interviews indicated that teachers frequently made *Book Bank* books available for silent reading.

The DEC program manager related how one school had reinstated reading time because *"the students wanted it when they had Book Bank books to read"*. She recounted her observations that students in schools were reading "*more often and more regularly*".

Teachers differed in their willingness to permit students to take books home to read during the term. Some teachers were conscious of the risk of loss or damage, despite reassurances from the DCC program manager that lost books would be replaced.

Survey results indicate that most students read at school (88%). Nearly half the students surveyed also read their books at home, as per Figure 3.12.

Figure 3.12: Student survey: Where students read books
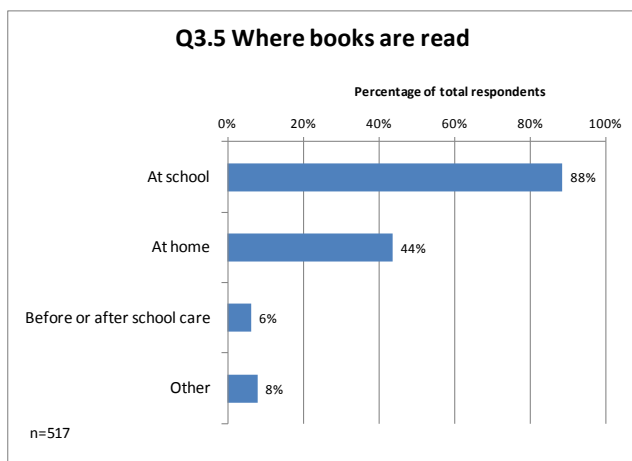
Several teachers commented that it was important to keep books at school to facilitate swapping.

Swapping books

Swapping is a feature of the *Book Bank* program that clearly distinguishes it from borrowing books from a library. Once students have read their own *Book Bank* book they are encouraged to swap their book with a classmate or borrow from the class book bank.

Swapping books brings students into a social setting where reading is a shared interest. One teacher described students sharing "*interests around similar themes and particular characters*". In an interview, one student commented:

> "*It's really cool because sometimes there's more than one [book] so you and your friend can read the same book.*"

Swapping is a back-up for students who have found it hard to choose a book for themselves. They were able to read books they liked but hadn't chosen. Some students swapped books between themselves without returning the book to the class *Book Bank*. Further details about the frequency of swapping *Book Bank* books and who supports students to swap can be found on page 44 in Section 4.1.3.

Swapping books was often discussed in the student interviews. Students indicated that they feel a commitment to read the book, especially because the swapped book belongs to another student. Students who choose 'good' books are recognised by their peers. Frequently students organised among themselves who would get their book next. In some situations, the books became almost a currency that was eagerly traded.

Some students spoke of the obligation to take care of their friends' books. One parent recognised this and commented that *Book Bank* promoted, "responsibility towards books of other people."

Sharing books

Sometimes books are swapped because the book owner has 'shared' and promoted the book to other students. Sharing is another social aspect of *Book Bank* that builds relationships between students, and between teachers and students. One parent summed up the impact of *Book Bank* by saying that:

> "*The physical reading of books hasn't changed but maybe some of the stuff around that: the exchange of books. Perhaps they talk a bit more about books amongst themselves.*"

Sharing takes place both formally and informally in the classroom. Year 6 students at one school shared books by reading to Kindergarten students. Some students had teacher-initiated opportunities to talk about the book they were reading. One teacher responded to the children; she explained "*(the students) wanted to talk about their books,*" so she established formal sharing sessions where students talked about the books they liked and didn't like.

In the student survey, 72% of students agreed that sharing information and opinions about their books increased their interest in reading, as shown in Figure 3.13.

Figure 3.13: Student survey: Sharing *Book Bank* books increases interest in reading

n=517
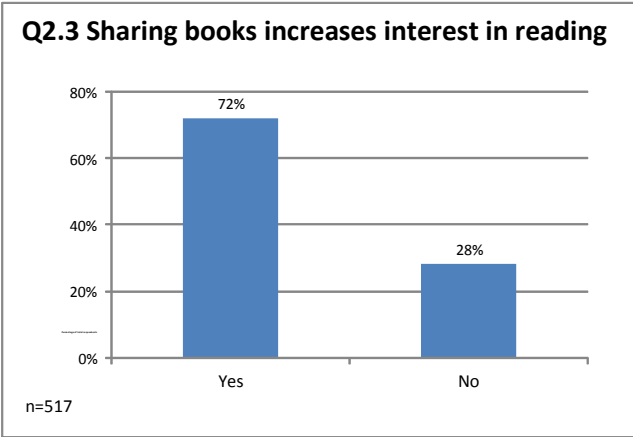
In interviews, two students indicated they wanted to take sharing beyond the school. They were interested in the experiences of students at the other *Book Bank* schools. One suggested that it would be good to know which books were the *"top ten picks!"* across all pilot classes. The other student wanted *Book Bank* to *"be on the internet"* so students could *"keep track of books people chose like on You Tube."*

Many students confirmed that talking about books occurred in their classes, and that it often revolved around making choices of which books to swap or choose from the catalogue, as shown in Figure 3.14. The majority of students surveyed (77%) agreed that sharing in class helped them choose a book to read.

Figure 3.14: Student survey: Talking about books (sharing) and choosing a book
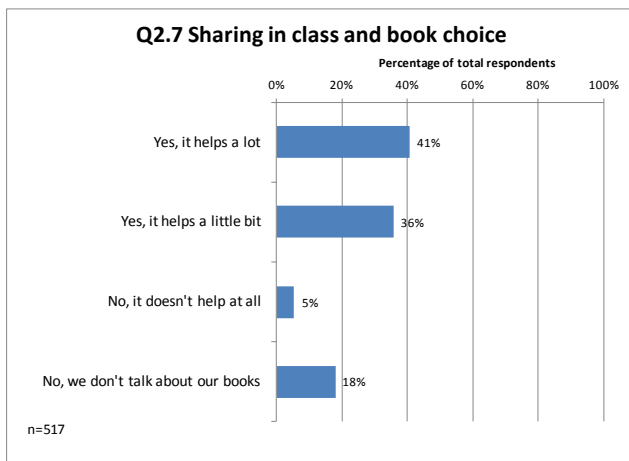
Students surveyed also confirmed that sharing increased engagement with reading. When asked whether talking about their book made them want to read more books, 72% of students agreed that talking about their book (sharing) increased their interest in reading books.

One school *Book Bank* manager explained that *Book Bank* had a social function, in that students knew the books their peers had read:

> *"[Sharing means that] if one person reads a book and likes it, you will find out that their five friends have read it too."*

The purpose of sharing for students was captured by a survey comment from one teacher:

> *"They share opinions and are genuinely interested in what is hot and what is not."*

Book Bank stickers

Stickers are provided in the front of each book for students to write their opinions of the books they read. While writing comments is optional, the student survey results indicate that most students do choose to write comments, as shown in Figure 3.15.

Students indicated that they value the stickers for a variety of reasons, including:

> *"…because it tells you who read the book."*
>
> *"…because it helps the teacher know what books you're into."*
>
> *"…because when other students look at the comments it makes them want to read it more."*
>
> *"…because you can look back through your book and see what other people thought."*
>
> *"…because at the end of the year you can see what the popular book is."*

Students gave examples of comments that they read or had written. They ranged from simple comments such as "*awesome*" to more detailed phrases that related to a feature of the book, e.g. "*It's a really good horse book.*"

One parent mentioned that her daughter thought it would be good to write comments online to share.

Figure 3.15: Student survey: *Book Bank* sticker comments

Q3.6 Writing comments on sticker; by school Year

n=517
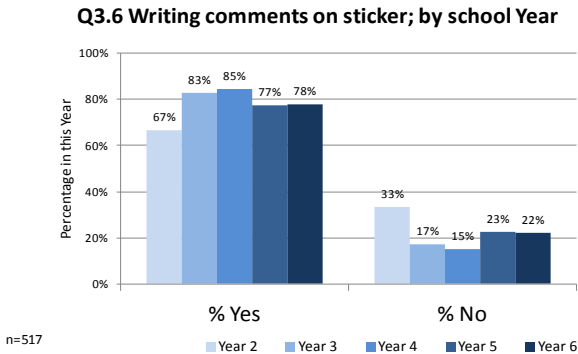
Figure 3.15 also indicates that the comments on stickers were not used by all students. Between 15-23% of students in Years 3 to 6 indicated they do not write comments. This number is greater only in Year 2, the youngest group completing the survey, where only two-thirds thought writing on the *Book Bank* stickers was a good idea.

Interview responses provided possible reasons for not using the comment sticker. One student explained that other students don't get to read his book because "*I get longer books and it takes a while for me to read (them)."* Another suggested that "*sometimes people forgot."* One parent explained that *"My daughter really likes not having to write a comment."*

Several interviewed teachers commented about how much students liked both writing and reading the comments, whether they said the book was good or bad. Nineteen out of 30 teachers surveyed agreed that students use the stickers to read and write comments (Figure 3.16).

Figure 3.16: Teacher survey: Students read *Book Bank* stickers and write comments

Q2.6 Students read the sticker and write comments.

Number of respondents

n=30
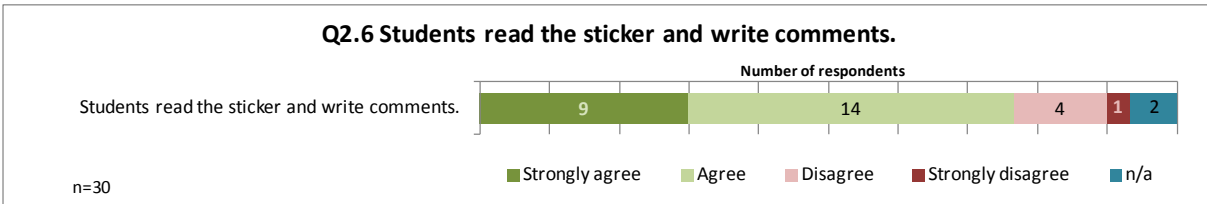
One principal acknowledged that there was a "*bit of competition"* about how many names a student had on the sticker in their book.

The DEC program manager admitted that initially she was "*concerned about what the students would write.*" However, during a school visit, one student spoke to her about the comments on the sticker in her *Book Bank* book:

> "(She) said it was like her year 6 farewell book 'because I have all these memories of my friends who have read this book with me'."

Teachers interviewed said that there were only rare instances of inappropriate or silly comments being written on the stickers, and a reminder to students quickly resolved the problem.

3.2. Student achievement

The impact of *Book Bank* on reading engagement was addressed in section 3.1. Research around achievement suggests that increased levels of engagement have a positive impact on student learning outcomes (Guthrie, 2001; Clark, Woodley and Lewis, 2011).

This section presents preliminary findings related to the impact of *Book Bank* on student learning achievement in reading and other aspects of literacy.

In all the pilot schools, *Book Bank* operates in conjunction with the class literacy program. In particular, *Book Bank* supports silent or independent reading both at school and at home.

3.2.1. Reading motivation and confidence

Book Bank has had an impact on student learning, according to teachers, by improving students' confidence and motivation to read.

Teachers were asked in both interviews and surveys if, in their professional judgement, the addition of *Book Bank* has had an impact on reading behaviours. As shown in Figure 3.17, the most commonly reported impacts were: students' self-initiated reading for pleasure; students selecting more complex and varied reading materials; and increased participation and self-confidence shown in class reading activities.

Figure 3.17: Teacher survey: Impact of *Book Bank* on reading behaviours
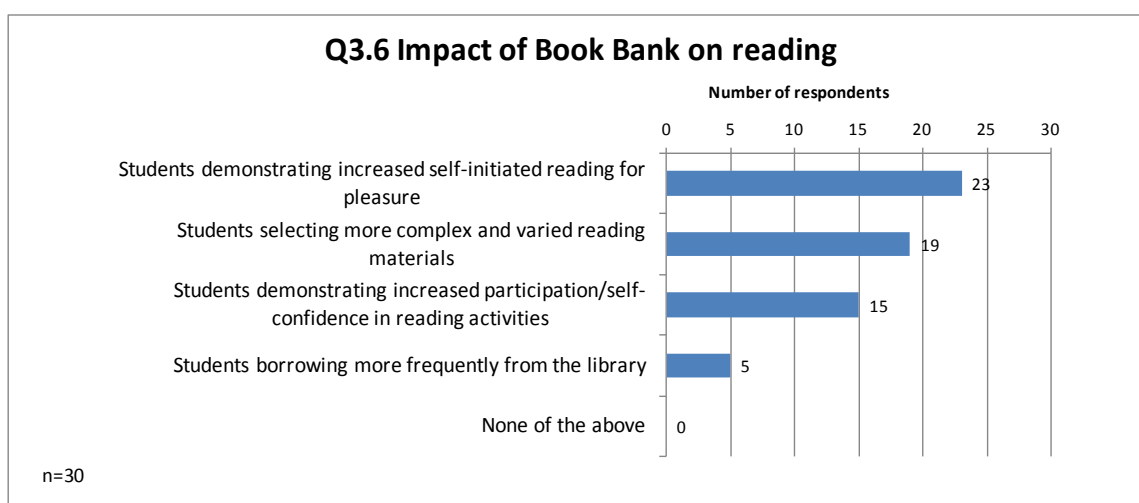
In interviews, teachers and other staff similarly identified specific improvements for students in reading, including increased motivation and reading skill development. Teachers commented that students were choosing to read challenging texts for pleasure, that is, texts above their instructional level.

Increased participation in reading, according to one student interviewed, is due to increased confidence:

> *"You practise at home and get in and have a go, then in class you won't be afraid that the class will laugh at you when you make a mistake."*

One teacher described how *Book Bank* had helped two of her *"most reluctant readers".* Before long, they wanted to organise *Book Bank* in the classroom. The teachers summed it up as follows:

> *"For them, now, because they can read, they can get loud and proud."*

3.2.2. Reading skills

Survey results, shown in Figure 3.18, reveal that nearly all teachers agreed that *Book Bank* contributed to students' reading skill development.

Figure 3.18: Teacher survey: Contribution of *Book Bank* to reading skill development
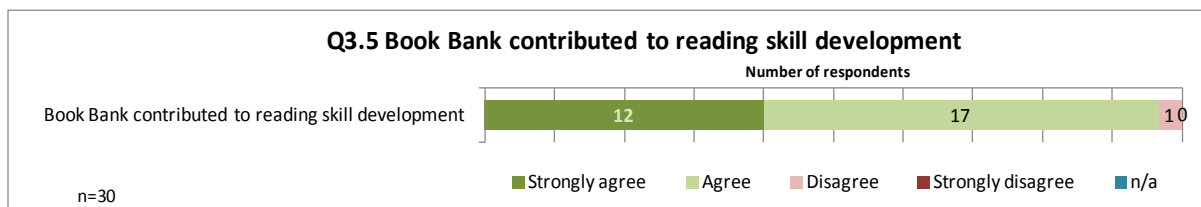
During school visits there were many comments made in the interviews about the improvement in students' reading skills following the introduction of *Book Bank*. Teachers reported that *Book Bank* supports English syllabus outcomes and complements existing class programs. As one teacher described:

> *"It blends well with our Focus on Reading [program]. It has connected [students] to those strategies and they use them [when reading] on their own."*

In addition to general comments about enhanced reading skills, such as *"The kids' reading skills and interest has grown considerably"*, individual teachers reported specific improvements in reading comprehension skills; oral reading and self-selection of books at an appropriate reading level.

Improvement in comprehension skills was frequently mentioned, and one teacher highlighted this by adding *"especially as [students] are choosing harder texts."* *Book Bank* was seen as a resource where students were challenging themselves with more demanding books.

Students were asked in their interviews whether *Book Bank* was helping them become better readers. They identified skills they were using to get better at reading. These included:

> *"Sounding out words helps you understand."*
>
> *"To improve you read (books) a puny bit harder than you usually do."*
>
> *"If you continue on you might get the meaning."*
>
> *"You have to understand the words first. A dictionary helps…"*
>
> *"Reading more helps."*

Oral reading

While development of oral reading skills was not a focus of the surveys or interviews, they were mentioned by a number of people in interviews.

One student explained that, "*better readers use more expression*". A parent noted that since her daughter has been reading books from *Book Bank* "*she is starting to read with expression.*" Another parent said that her son used to read too quickly "*but with these Book Bank books he slows down.*"

It is recommended that this issue be further examined in Phase 2 of the evaluation, to see if students' oral reading improves as a result of engaging with books they chose and owned, or were chosen by their peers.

Reading level

One of the important aspects of successfully teaching reading is ensuring students have access to texts at the correct instructional level. Teachers made individual decisions about which catalogues to provide to their students.

Almost all teachers in the survey confirmed that their students had chosen a book they could read independently (Figure 3.19).

Figure 3.19: Teacher survey: Students chose books they could read independently
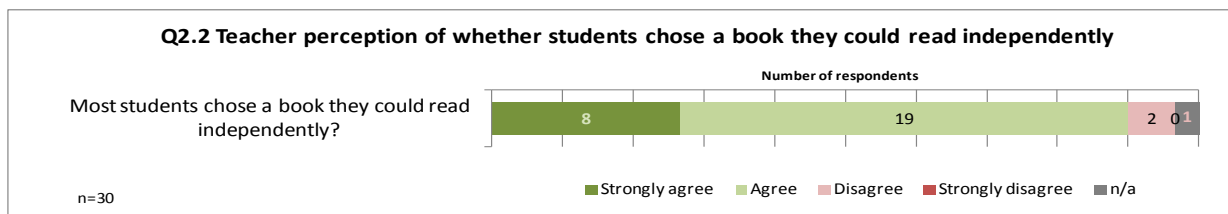
One teacher reported that:

> *"… our top readers are choosing Stage 4 books. It's great for them because they know where their level is."*

One student said that even though the book chosen was too hard, *"I would ask Dad (to read it to me)"*. On the other hand, a teacher encountered instances where students *"gave up when it got difficult."*

In one school, teachers ensured students were able to read the book they received by organising an exchange, if necessary. Similarly, some Year 3 students had been able to '*cross class swap'* because their book was too easy. According to one parent, an advantage of *Book Bank* was that it provided "*benefits for students with all levels of reading ability."*

3.2.3. Improvements in other aspects of literacy

Many surveys and interview respondents commented on students' performance beyond reading skills. They drew links between the features of *Book Bank* and their impact on students' broader literacy skills: speaking and listening, spelling and vocabulary, writing and literacy across the range of Key Learning Areas (KLAs).

Speaking skills

Teachers commented on the improvement in the quality of students' language when talking about texts as a result of engaging with *Book Bank*.

A school *Book Bank* manager commented on students' increased speaking skills, stating that, *"book talks have really improved."* The program has encouraged students to talk about characters and how they develop from a wider range of books. Students initiated conversations about *Book Bank* books, as described by one teacher:

> *"They recommend books to each other, expanding the whole class knowledge of genres and authors."*

Spelling and vocabulary

Students identified spelling as an area that improved with reading more books, some suggesting it made spelling "easier". For younger students, *Book Bank* assisted in learning to read "*bigger words*".

Parents and teachers commented on students increased vocabulary, attributed to experiencing a wider range of written texts. As one student expressed it, *"you can discover new words you haven't heard of before."*

Writing

Access to a range of books through *Book Bank* was perceived to help children with writing. One principal commented that reading engagement contributes to the development of writing skills:

"Reading develops pictures in their heads and helps them write better stories."

Other skills that contribute to writing, such as spelling and vocabulary, were also mentioned.

One parent stated that:
"A wide variety of books gives [my son] a large variety of imaginative things he can create in his writing."

Improvement in writing skills was identified by several students as a benefit of increased reading. Students made several comments about the value of reading for generating ideas for writing. The following quote was made by a student who wanted to become an author:

"Reading books is the first step to creating stories."

Engagement with writing was not addressed in the teacher or the student surveys and could be considered for inclusion in Phase 2 of the evaluation.

Learning in all Key Learning Areas (KLAs)

Both fiction and non-fiction books were included in the *Book Bank* catalogues, with a view to catering for all areas of student interest.

Some students commented on their interest in the non-fiction books. One student reported that her book *"… gave me a heap of interesting facts."* Another viewed reading as supporting learning in other topics, suggesting *"It's a good chance to build up your mind."*

In one interview, a student reported that improved reading skills have helped when reading text in mathematical problems.

4. Implementation and management of *Book Bank* in schools

The *Book Bank* model was designed and developed by the program managers from Dymocks Children's Charities (DCC) and NSW Department of Education and Communities (DEC). The program was introduced in five pilot schools, with support for the implementation shared between the program managers.

The following sections outline findings related to:
- implementation of the program at the school level, and
- operation at a whole-of-program level.

4.1. Implementation in the pilot schools

In each school, the members of the *Book Bank* team made changes to the operation of the program to address local issues, such as how the selection of books was conducted, whether *Book Bank* books could be taken home during term and when students would take their book home to keep.

At the commencement of the pilot, the *Book Bank* program managers visited three schools to explain the program and help each school with planning and implementation. The remaining two schools were contacted via video conference.

Schools used the feedback generated during the first phase of implementation to make some improvements early on in the program's implementation.

There were numerous issues around the implementation of the program:
- discussion with teachers and students about the introduction of the program
- establishing a *Book Bank* school team
- aspects of the *Book Bank* model
- the operation of *Book Bank* in the classroom
- the relationship of *Book Bank* to school literacy programs

4.1.1. Teacher and student involvement

Two thirds of respondents to the teacher survey confirmed that they were involved in discussions about the introduction of *Book Bank*, as shown in Figure 4.1. Of the ten teachers who reported that they *did not* participate in discussions, six were not working at the school when *Book Bank* was introduced.

Figure 4.1: Teacher survey: Teachers involved in discussions about the implementation of *Book Bank*

Q4.2 Teacher involved in discussions about implementation

n=30
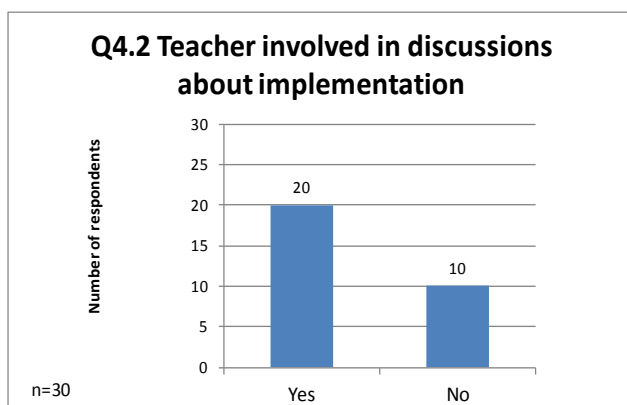
The focus of the program manager visits to schools was to assist with training the school *Book Bank* managers in the procedures for ordering and distributing the books.

The model recommended that schools select senior students to take on the role of *Book Bank* managers. Most schools involved these students in preliminary meetings, although how they would take full responsibility for the program was unclear. One program manager described the situation:

> *"The students were keen and had a voice but whether they could really manage the program alone was uncertain."*

In practice, while three schools reported having senior students work with the school *Book Bank* manager, their roles largely involved:

- explaining *Book Bank* to other students
- assisting to compile the book orders
- distributing books to each classroom

One school initially involved some Year 5 and 6 students in running the book orders, but found the job was better done by a teacher.

Teachers were asked to indicate whether any of their students were involved, and at what level. As can be seen in Figure 4.2, 14 teachers reported that one or more students in their class were involved in *Book Bank* at class level, while only two indicated involvement at a wider, school level. Ten teachers responded that no students in their class were involved at any level.

Figure 4.2: Teacher survey: Level of student involvement in the organisation of *Book Bank*

Q2.10 Student involvement in the organisation of Book Bank
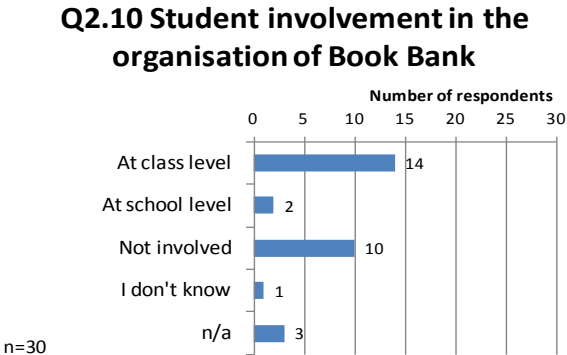
The DEC program manager commented on the expectation that students could lead the program:

> *"I probably had some inflated expectations about students managing the program... My initial perception that the students would do most of the legwork really wasn't realistic."*

4.1.2. Book Bank team

In this report, the group of people helping the school *Book Bank* manager is referred to as the *Book Bank* team. The *Book Bank* team model included a community support person, a staff support person and senior students. The composition of each team varied from school to school.

In all schools, the staff support person soon became the school *Book Bank* manager. This person enlisted support from the school community and was responsible for the management of the program.

In most cases, it was difficult for schools to find the right person to take on the community support role. One school had a parent support person in the first year but was unable to replace her when she left.

Two schools decided not to seek a representative from the school parent community. Another two schools found that the initial parent member wasn't suited to the role, with one principal reporting that a parent had volunteered at the beginning but didn't continue. He commented:

> *"There is a lot of paperwork. We would have to know that someone is capable. We don't want it [Book Bank] to fall in a heap."*

In all schools, the school *Book Bank* manager was supported by other members of other staff, such as the Aboriginal Education Officer or library assistant. Where the manager had a teaching role, principals usually provided extra time off class during the book ordering period. At one school, a library volunteer helped with ordering and at another the teacher-librarian helped K-2 students select their books. In another school, the Aboriginal Education Officer helped with ordering and distribution.

4.1.3. Book Bank model

In each pilot school the model was implemented in ways to suit each teacher's program and meet the needs of the students. Various methods were negotiated to implement the key features of the model:

- focus on Years 3-6
- book selection by students
- frequency of swapping and sharing
- opportunities for students to take their books home to keep.

Throughout this section, there are two uses made of the term *Book Bank*: '*Book Bank*' refers to the overall Dymocks Children's Charities *Book Bank* program; while 'book bank' or 'class book bank' refers to the collection of books retained in the classroom to enable swapping of books during each term.

Focus on Years 3-6

Book Bank was intended to be implemented for students in Years 3 to 6. This was varied in the pilot for the smallest school, Fort St Public School, where there are three multi-age classes and one kindergarten class. In view of the small number of teaching staff to support the program, *Book Bank* was offered from Kindergarten to Year 6.

The Fort St *Book Bank* manager indicated that several issues emerged in the younger classes, especially related to the difficulties of students choosing their books. One teacher commented:

> *"…but for Kindergarten it does take time. I can see why it [Book Bank] wasn't designed for Kindergarten."*

The decision to offer *Book Bank* only to Years 3 to 6 was problematic in other schools. Where there was a 2/3 class, for example, teachers had to find ways to make the program work for them. In two cases, teachers shared the Year 3 students' books with the Year 2 students so the program could operate across the whole class. One teacher suggested a solution to facilitate swapping:

> *"I bulked up the collection with books from the library so Year 2 [could] participate."*

At one school the teacher decided that all the *Book Bank* books stayed in the classroom until the end of the year and only then did the Year 3 students take their (four) books home.

In one school, joining the program in Year 3 was seen as a valuable *'rite of passage'*.

Book selection: student choice of books

Student survey data indicates that most students do choose their own *Book Bank* books, as shown in Figure 4.3.

Figure 4.3: Student survey: Student chose own book

Q2.4 Student choice of book from Book Bank list

n=517
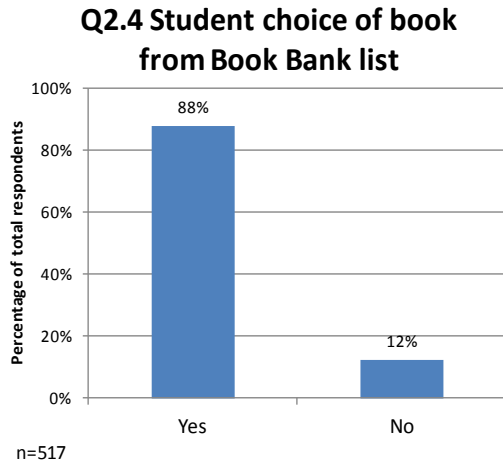
The program managers found that students at one school had not chosen their books in the first round. The following year a new school *Book Bank* manager took over and students did get to choose from the catalogue. The program managers assisted the school to implement this process.

During initial discussions to introduce *Book Bank* and explain the model, the DEC program manager observed that several teachers were concerned that open choice might *"set up students to fail"*.

In addition to students choosing directly from the catalogue, teachers described a number of different models for book selection:

- teachers chose a book for each student
- teachers chose a selection of books, from which students in the class could choose
- teachers guided students' choice, in one case in order to avoid too much duplication

One teacher, who chose a set of books for her class from the catalogues, explained that her students liked to see the actual books when choosing. She included the extra class books provided by *Book Bank* so that all students to had several to choose from.

Most interviewed teachers offered students only the catalogue at their grade level. At one school the school *Book Bank* manager allowed Year 6 students to order from the catalogue for the stage below as well as the catalogue for their stage. Another school offered students the catalogue for Stage 4 (secondary school), particularly for students in OC classes[3]. However, the teacher-librarian at the school guided these students to ensure that the books they chose were "*appropriate for their age*."

The practice of students choosing their own book had implications for the class book bank. Two teachers commented on this during interviews. One school *Book Bank* manager explained how selection was managed to ensure variety:

---

[3] Opportunity classes (OC) provide intellectual stimulation and an academically enriched environment for academically gifted and talented children in Years 5 and 6.

"Sometimes they [students] don't get their first choice if the teacher has set limits and say only three students can get the same book in a term. The others have to wait to get their first choice in the second term because more than three wanted the same book."

In interviews, students and teachers explained situations when students were not able to choose their own book:

- the student was absent when selections were made
- the student was new to the school
- the student was not enrolled when selections were made
- the student did not receive the book of their choice because it was not available
- the teacher limited the number of each title so that there would be a variety of books available to swap.

Irrespective of whether they chose their own book, nearly all students (93%) reported that they enjoyed the book they received, as shown in Figure 4.4.

Figure 4.4: Student survey: Student enjoyed book from *Book Bank*
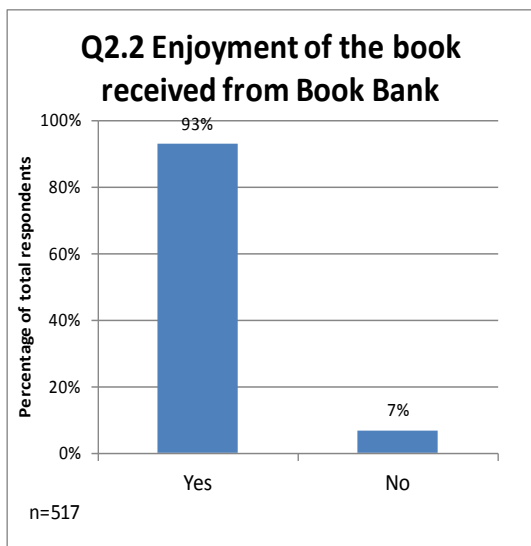
During interviews parents and students identified two possible reasons why the 7% of students may not have enjoyed the book chosen: the book was either too hard or too easy, or they made a mistake in selections and the book was not about what they were interested in.

An important part of *Book Bank*'s intention is to assist students to realise that it is all right to find they do not enjoy a book they have chosen to read.

Book selection process

Figure 4.5 shows that almost all teachers agreed that the selection process at their school was efficient.

Figure 4.5: Teacher survey: Efficiency of the book selection process
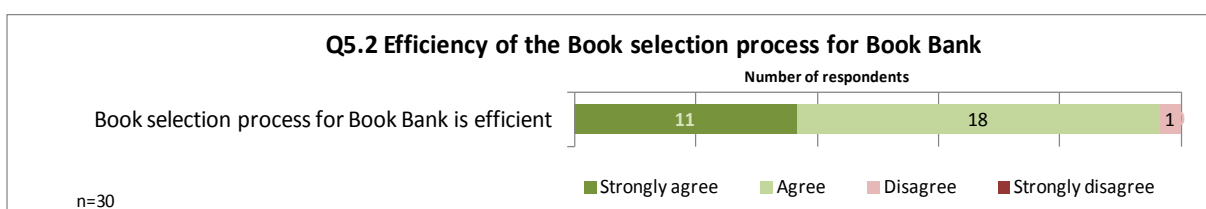
Teachers interviewed indicated they used a range of strategies for managing book selection, including:

- making choices as a whole class did not work
- using the interactive whiteboard to display the choices
- using a printout of the catalogue
- using the internet.

During a focus group, one student explained how the selection process worked:

"We looked at the books through the computer as a whole class and we put up our hand when we saw a book we wanted."

One teacher found that making choices as a whole class did not work. Another school *Book Bank* manager was the teacher-librarian. She knew a lot about the books in the catalogue so used this information to help students decide which book to choose. She explained her process as follows:

"We found it was easier for me to do it than the teachers. I had a day off class to pull out groups to choose their books."

Swapping books

All stakeholder groups confirmed that swapping books with other students took place as part of the program. There was one exception where a student reported that:

"Our class is different because our teacher doesn't let us borrow other people's books."

In the student survey, 80% of respondents to this question indicated that they swapped books or borrowed from the class book bank when they have finished a book, as shown in Figure 4.6. The frequency of swapping depended more often on the time it took to finish a book than on a weekly or monthly basis.

Figure 4.6: Student survey: How often students swap books
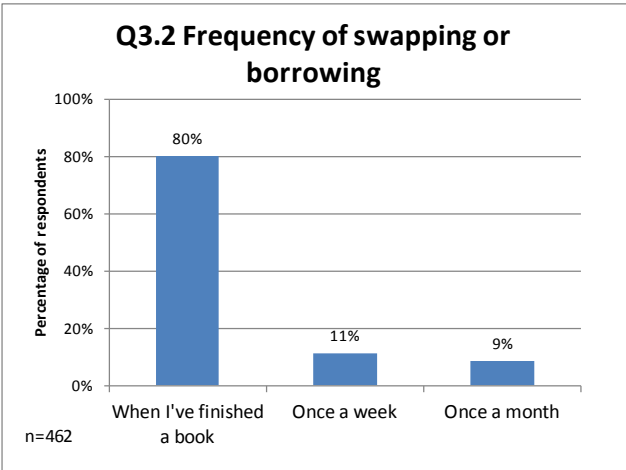
Note: 55 survey respondents did not complete this question.

Teacher survey results show that the number of times students swap books varies across and within classes. Figure 4.6 shows an equal distribution of responses for each option. As suggested in Figure 4.7, frequency is influenced by how long it takes students to finish a book. One student, when interviewed, reflected this:

"I would like to borrow five if I was allowed. I get books for [ages] 7 to 9 and they are longer."

Dymocks Children's Charities *Book Bank*: Interim Report

Figure 4.7: Teacher survey: Estimated frequency of students swapping books

Q2.5 Frequency of swapping or borrowing from Book Bank

Number of respondents

Category	Value
More than five times a term	9
Three to five times a term	9
One or two times a term	9
n/a	3

n=30
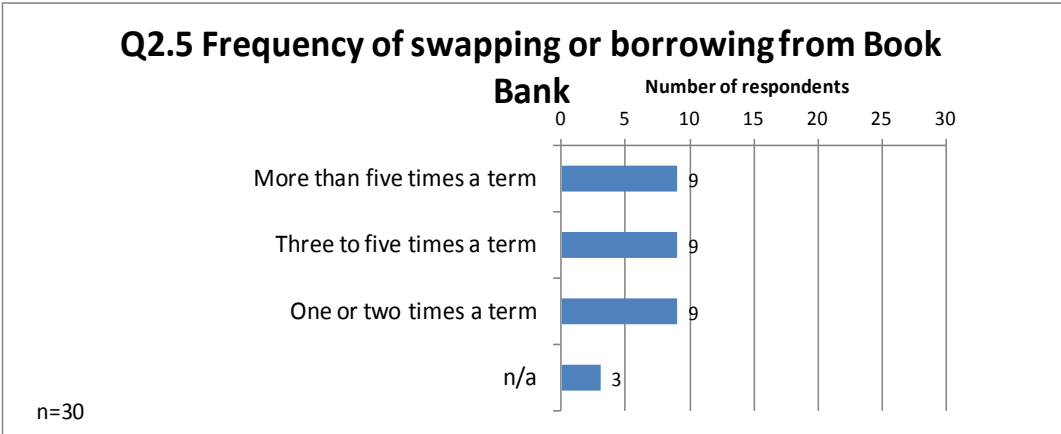
When interviewed, students and teachers provided examples of some the challenges encountered when trying to swap books, including:

- students being slow to return their own book to the classroom book bank
- books being taken home to read and not returned (or lost)
- when books get lost there are 'squabbles'
- having to wait until someone returns a book.

The success of swapping was clear from the enthusiasm shown by students for the process, and the care that students took with their classmates' books. As one teacher summed it up:

"The books get worn out before they get lost."

Students identified those who helped them when swapping books. As can be seen in Figure 4.8, teachers and classmates were identified as the largest groups. Assistance also came from a range of other sources including students who help run *Book Bank.*

The most frequent response was 'Nobody'. There is some ambiguity with this response. It is unclear whether this suggests that no one was available to assist, or that the student didn't need any help. This will be further explored in Phase 2 of the evaluation.

Figure 4.8: Student survey: Help with swapping books

Q3.3 Help with swapping the book

Percentage of total respondents

Category	Value
My teacher	25%
The librarian	9%
My classmates	23%
A student who helps run Book Bank	4%
A teacher from another class	3%
Someone from my family	3%
A school parent or helper	4%
Nobody	41%

n=517
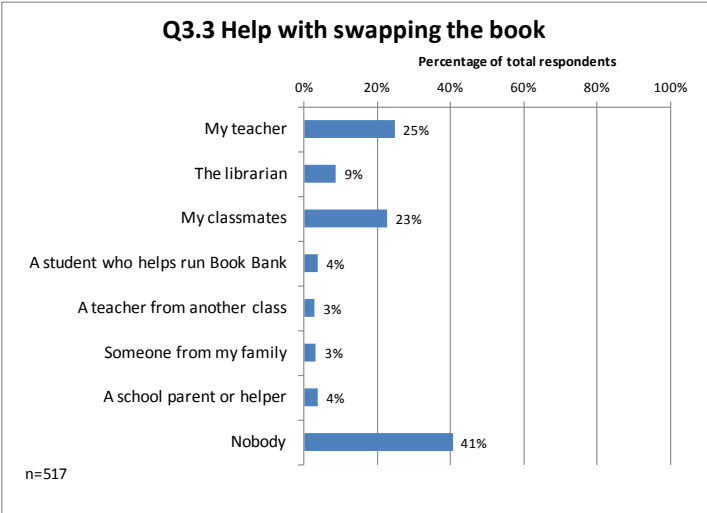
Stickers

Each book has a sticker in the front to record both the name of the owner and the names and comments of people who read the book. The sticker and processes of writing comments is another feature that distinguishes *Book Bank* books from library books.

Students and teachers perceived stickers as an extension of the sharing process, and a way of helping students decide what book to choose.

The school *Book Bank* manager and helpers at one school wrote the names of the owners on the sticker before handing out the book. In other schools, the students wrote their own name. Only two parents interviewed were aware of the sticker.

Class poster

The *Book Bank* poster is designed to record how many students have read each book and to keep track of swapping, so a book could be tracked to the current borrower. Over half the teachers who received a poster agreed that it was useful (Figure 4.9). A similar level of support was expressed in teacher interviews, with one teacher explaining that *"you can see the popular books."* Others expressed some ambivalence about the poster.

Figure 4.9: Teacher survey: *Book Bank* poster is helpful

Q2.7 The Book Bank poster has been helpful.

Number of respondents

| The Book Bank poster has been helpful. | 4 | 12 | 8 | 1 | 3 | 2 |

n=30

■ Strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Disagree ■ Strongly disagree ■ I did not receive a poster ■ n/a
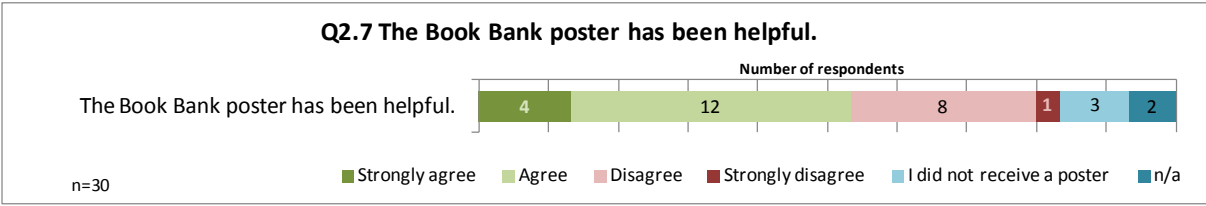
In interviews, students confirmed that the poster was used in their class even if the teacher had to remind them. One student said it was useful because *"you know who has your book."*

Three teachers in the survey indicated they had not received a *Book Bank* poster.

Sharing or talking about books

The student survey revealed that nearly a third of students indicated that they did not have a formal class *Book Bank* sharing time, as shown in Figure 4.10.

Figure 4.10: Student survey: Sharing time in class

Q2.6 Book Bank sharing time

Percentage of total respondents

- Yes: 69%
- No: 31%

n=517
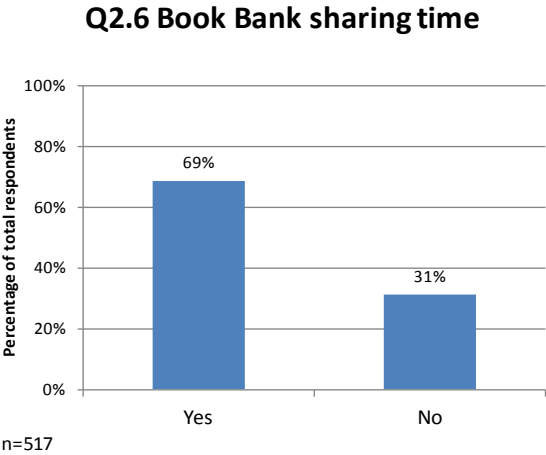
This response aligns with the teachers' interview comments which distinguished between formal and informal sharing among students. Formal sharing was sometimes facilitated by teachers as a class activity, but also occurred spontaneously between students. One student interviewed described those occasions:

> *"We do a bit of chit chat when we are out of class."*

Teachers were also positive about sharing. In the teacher survey, 22 out of 30 teachers agreed that students talking about their books with their classmates was a strength of the program. Teachers identified the benefits of students sharing:

> *"They are sharing their positive reaction to literature and their enthusiasm".*

> *"They want to share and read their friends' books too".*

Where students made many positive comments about 'sharing' *Book Bank* books, they highlighted talking to friends who were reading the same book; the flexibility to talk about books both in class and in free time; and reading books to other students.

4.1.4. The class book bank

The *Book Bank* presence was evident in each of the classes observed by the evaluation officers. Further information was provided in the student and teacher interviews. It was apparent that the *Book Bank* books were stored and used in different ways in each of the five schools.

Establishing the class book bank

Most classes created a class book bank, displaying books on a shelf clearly labelled with a cardboard strip supplied by Dymocks Children's Charities. Some had books in tubs, boxes, bookstands or on tables. Some kept the books in individual folders and some separated books into 'girls' and boys' titles.

In each school, the intention to create a pool of books for sharing and swapping was well established. In some cases individual teachers made the decision to retain all books at school for this purpose.

Relationship to class literacy programs

In the introductory letter to schools, principals were advised that the *Book Bank* program *"is designed to work alongside classroom lessons and school-based programs, rather than rely upon teacher time or intervention."* At one school the principal reiterated this message:

> *"Book Bank is really not part of class literacy programs because the students take the books home to read. (It is) viewed as a student resource."*

Despite this, the importance of teacher encouragement and promotion of the program was noted in several schools, by principals and parents as well as teachers themselves. One parent said in interview that "*Book Bank was a jolly waste of money if the teachers aren't completely involved in it."*

As shown in Figure 4.11, the teacher survey revealed strong support for the suggestion that *Book Bank* supports school literacy programs, with only two teachers (6%) disagreeing.

Figure 4.11: Teacher survey: *Book Bank* supports the school's literacy program
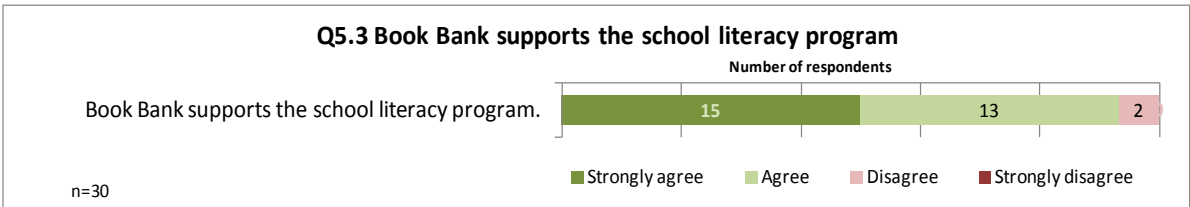
As shown in Figure 4.12 two thirds of surveyed teachers indicated that *Book Bank* books were used in silent reading time.

Figure 4.12: Teacher survey: How *Book Bank* is used in the classroom

Q2.4 Book Bank use in the classroom

Use	Number of respondents
As a free choice activity i.e. reading for pleasure	2
As silent reading e.g. DEAR, SSR	9
As part of my teaching program for reading	2
As silent reading and as part of my teaching program for reading	2
All of the above	13
n/a	2

n=30
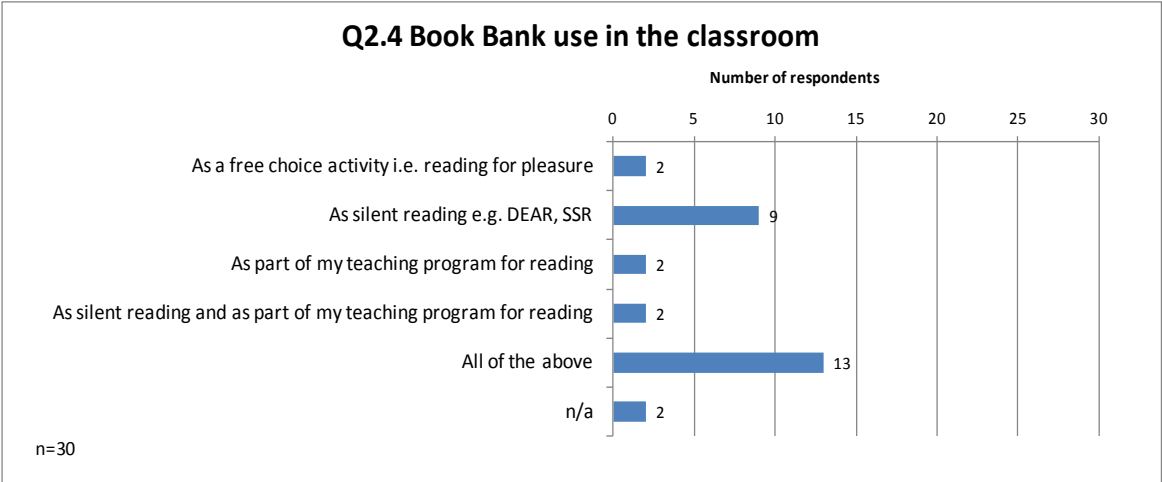
Figure 4.12 also indicates that over one third of teachers used *Book Bank* reading for pleasure and as part of the class teaching program. In interviews, teachers described how they utilised *Book Bank* beyond silent reading:

- as the focus of contract work , such as *"with Bloom's taxonomy sheet that's generalised"*
- as reading for enjoyment, such as "during fruit break time"
- as the selected text for structured reading activities

One teacher described how *Book Bank* books were included in the class literacy program.

> *"I include a couple of Book Bank books in the Reading to Learn program. I already had the interest base because many of the students had read them."*

4.1.5.   Relationship to school literacy programs

School literacy programs were discussed in the interviews with principals. All schools were involved in implementation of whole-class or whole-school literacy programs such as *Accelerated Literacy*, *Reading to Learn* or *L3*. Each of these programs utilises quality literary texts as the basis of class reading programs, and are well complemented by students' own reading.

Book Bank does not have a professional learning component and does not involve explicit instruction in reading. It provides the opportunity and incentive to read for pleasure and only requires that the books are accessible to students. *Book Bank* sharing and swapping is encouraged and supported in most classes throughout the pilot schools.

4.2.   Management of *Book Bank* at program level

The day-to-day operation of *Book Bank* is managed by class teachers in all the pilot schools, as described in section 4.1.

This section focuses on the support provided to students and teachers by the school *Book Bank* managers and team members, in the processes of selecting and receiving their books. The main functions of the school *Book Bank* manager are:

- sending the catalogues to students and classes
- collating class orders and placing the school order
- checking the books once they arrive at school, against the school order and student name
- distributing the books.

All teachers surveyed agreed that the *Book Bank* program at their school had been managed effectively, as shown in Figure 4.13.

Figure 4.13: Teacher survey: Management of *Book Bank* program at school level
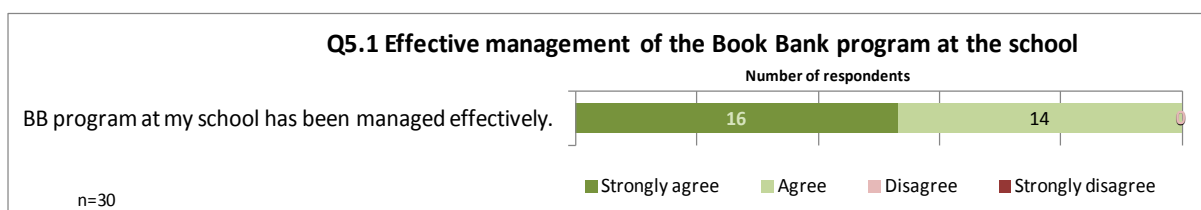
In interviews, principals acknowledged that the ordering and distribution tasks are time-consuming. In some of the pilot schools the school *Book Bank* manager is provided with additional relief time for organisation of *Book Bank*. In other cases it was noted that much of the time is contributed by the school *Book Bank* manager out of their own time.

Teachers also mentioned the time taken in class, or in release from face-to-face (RFF) time, to help students choose their books. One principal said time was needed *"to vet student choices."*

The DEC program manager identified the demands on teacher time as an issue, especially during the initial phase:

   "There is a fair bit of legwork by the teacher support person at the start of the program."

Phase 2 of the evaluations will seek to identify options and alternatives that may improve this aspect of the program.

4.2.1.   Ordering

In all pilot schools the school *Book Bank* manager compiled the orders from each class. Some teachers completed their class order on the spreadsheet and emailed their students' selections to the school *Book Bank* manager. In other cases, senior students entered their own choices without teacher assistance.

There were mixed comments expressed in interviews about the ordering process. The following points summarise teacher and student responses:

- Ordering two books at a time worked well.
- Ordering two books at a time is particularly beneficial if a book is not available; the student still has one book to start the semester with.
- Responsiveness of the program managers, and the improvements in the ordering spreadsheet made early in the pilot, were appreciated by teachers.
- Processing orders by class sets is effective at school level as it relieves the school *Book Bank* manager of the task of sorting the books when they arrive.
- Sometimes the tight timeframe made it difficult for students to make their selections and submit the class book order.
- Both ordering processes (June and December each year) occur at times when teachers are already particularly busy.

Very occasionally teachers expressed concern about the ordering process. One teacher summed up the process as a "*bit of a nightmare*."

Most school *Book Bank* managers expressed satisfaction with the current system running at their school.

Additional *Book Bank* books

Each class receives an extra 20 books per year (five per term) which are chosen by the class teacher. These books have been variously used by teachers to:

- replace lost books
- provide books for new students
- help children who are unhappy with their choice.

At one school the school *Book Bank* manager stores some books for these situations. Other schools leave the allocation and use of spares to the class teacher. One principal interviewed commented on the provision of books:

> "They always give extra books so a child doesn't miss out. We have a fairly fluid enrolment so that is good."

The DCC program manager has emphasised that teachers do not need to use the additional books for replacing lost books or for allocation to new students. In such instances, the *Book Bank* program will provide replacement books or additional books for new students. The program's intention is for the additional class books to be retained by the school, to augment class book banks and add to the swapping pool.

4.2.2. Delivery and distribution of books

As reported by some teachers, changes were made to book delivery to make distribution more efficient at the school level. The first order of books was organised by student name, which meant extra time for the school *Book Bank* manager to separate the books into classes. The ordering form was quickly changed so that books are ordered and delivered in class lots.

School *Book Bank* managers have used different ways to distribute books. One manager personally distributes the books to one student at a time. Another uses students in her own class to deliver the class orders to other classrooms. One student recalled receiving a book in assembly. As estimate from one principal suggests that the process takes at least half a day for the manager and an assistant.

4.2.3. Launching *Book Bank* and the role of Ambassadors

Each school held a special event to launch the *Book Bank* program. A 'high profile' ambassador was invited to promote the program to the students and school community. Ambassadors included:

- Ahn Do, comedian, author and local identity
- Adam Spencer, author and broadcaster
- Rob Carlton, actor and writer, known by the local community of the school he visited.

Ahn Do grew up in the area of the school he visited. The principal described the effect of the visit as "*aspirational (sic)*" One principal similarly described the significance of ambassador visits for students at his school:

> "*For these kids who rarely leave the area, to have someone come, it was just mind-boggling. It's 'school is a fun place to be.'"*

One teacher described the visit by the ambassador as "*an amazing experience",* adding that:

> "*...the fact that we have copies of his books and he was a real, live person. [The students] were amazed."*

Another school *Book Bank* manager commented that "*personal contact with authors was important."* She suggested that for her school, however, it "*would be better to have an Aboriginal artist."*

Unfortunately, two schools did not have an ambassador present at the launch of *Book Bank.* Students at these schools watched two videos of Ahn Do and Adam Spencer talking about reading and about *Book Bank*. The students received autographed bookmarks and students on the *Book Bank* teams received a copy of Ahn Do's book. However, there was significant disappointment in those communities, as expressed by one principal:

> "*[We were] very unhappy that our school didn't get an ambassador. The explanation was that it was too far to travel."*

The DEC program manager acknowledged that for those schools, "*it amplified the issue that the schools felt isolated."*

While the value of the ambassadors was well-appreciated at the time of the launch, when surveyed some months later, 73% of students could not recall any special *Book Bank* events, as shown in Figure 4.14.

Figure 4.14: Student survey: Special *Book Bank* activity held at school
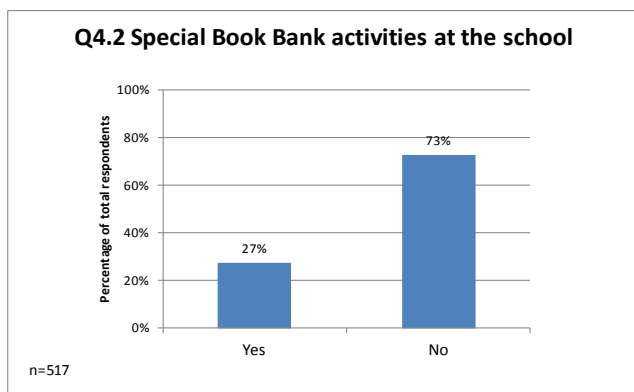
When interviewed, parents, teachers and students recalled special *Book Bank* events: 58 students identified Ahn Do as someone who came to school for the launch of *Book Bank;* ten students recalled Adam Spencer; and three recalled a visit by Rob Carlton.

When teachers were asked to identify strengths of the program the response, *"the program has been promoted by popular identities"* was the least frequently selected. Refer to Figure 3.7 in Section 3.1.2 .

The value of the launch and the ongoing role of the ambassadors will be further explored in Phase 2 of the evaluation.

4.2.4. Communication

Communication is often identified as one of the ongoing difficulties that schools face.

Communication with parents and the local community

In interviews, there were many comments about the difficulty in successfully passing information on to parents about the *Book Bank* program. One principal acknowledged that there was room for improvement but that *"it was difficult to communicate about any matter, anyway."*

Two principals identified difficulties for parents with language backgrounds other than English (LBOTE). One principal uses the school newsletter to publish *"reminders to keep reading."*

One parent interviewed said she didn't actually know what *Book Bank* was until the night before the interview, when her son explained it to her.

Teachers surveyed were asked for their opinion of whether parents knew about how *Book Bank* works. Over two thirds agreed or strongly agreed that parents were familiar with the operation of *Book Bank* (Figure 4.15).

Figure 4.15: Teacher survey: Parent knowledge of *Book Bank* program
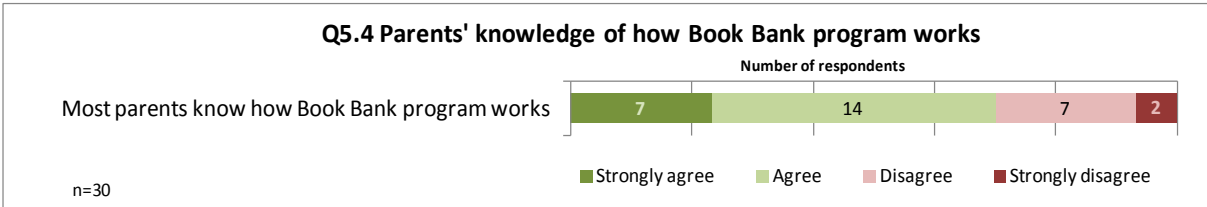
Promotion of the program

The *Book Bank* team was responsible for the promotion of *Book Bank* to the school community. The *Book Bank* information booklet given to the pilot schools asked students on the team to "organise one big sharing event" in addition to the launch of the program.

School events were organised by some school *Book Bank* teams. Two schools held promotional events: one school created a game at school and held an evening for the school community where students were asked questions about their favourite *Book Bank* books; another celebrated Book Week with students dressing as their favourite character from a *Book Bank* book they had read.

One school organised for the local newspaper to be present at the launch of *Book Bank.* One teacher remarked in an interview that *"it would be nice to repeat (these events) refresh, keep engaged."*

The *Book Bank* model included promotion of *Book Bank* to parents as part of the role of parent community support person. None of the schools had a support person at the time of the evaluation visit. One principal acknowledged that communicating with parents is *"an area for improvement."*

Most frequently, principals used the school newsletter to promote the program to the school community. Two schools included *Book Bank* in their Annual School Report.

Communication between program managers and schools

The DCC and DEC program managers obtained feedback about the implementation of the program through visits and communication with the participating schools.

The school visits provided opportunities for the program managers to monitor the operation of *Book Bank,* especially early on. In particular, the managers were able to observe how the essential features of *Book Bank* were being implemented.

For example, according to one program manager, there was initially some, "*nervousness"* amongst teachers, especially *"about releasing control and allowing students to choose their books."* The program managers noticed that the teachers in one school were choosing the books for the students. At the end of 2010, two people from DCC offered to go to that school and help the students choose their books. In 2011, all students at the school were able to choose their own books with the help of the school teacher-librarian and the school *Book Bank* manager.

There is currently no agreed definition of the roles of the DCC and DEC program managers, nor suggested procedures in the event that schools experience difficulties in any aspect of the program. One program manager commented on the need for DCC and DEC to clarify areas of responsibility, so that schools can be better supported:

> *"Communication with schools is a big problem: who makes the phone calls? Who chases up the books if they are not there in time? Who coordinates the launches and the ambassadors? All of that is very difficult."*

School visits

At each school launch the *Book Bank* ambassador spoke to the students about the importance of reading. The program managers repeated this message when visiting schools and classrooms.

According to the DCC program manager:

"When [we] went out to schools we talked to children about what makes a good reader. There were many kids (who) said they would only read what they had to. They would never pick up a book by choice."

In the survey, students were asked about any visitors that came to their school. The question captured visits by ambassadors as well as the program managers. For many students the visits by the program managers provided a motivational effect. Figure 4.16 shows that 64% of students reported that they would "*try to read more books*"; 42% suggested they would "*read different kinds of books*".

The DEC program manager commented that:

"We did a range of different things [rather than] just handing books out to students. We wanted them to get excited about owning the program."

Figure 4.16: Student survey: Impact of the visitor on student reading

Dymocks Children's Charities *Book Bank*: Interim Report
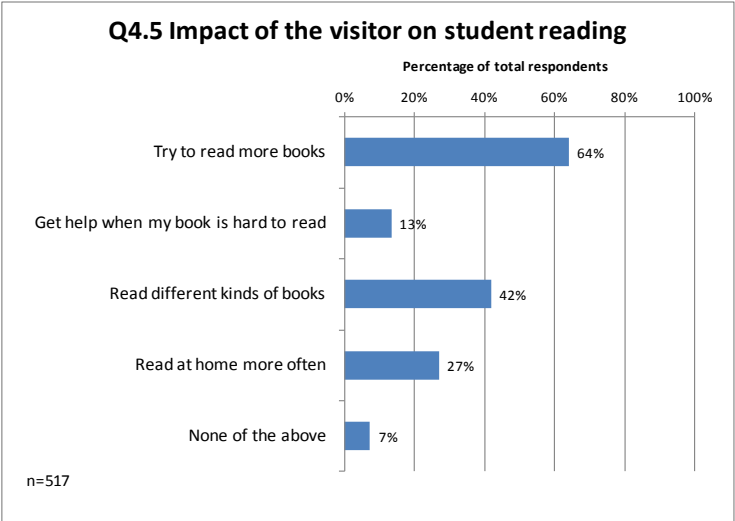
5. Sustainability and scalability of the *Book Bank* program

As discussed in the previous sections, a number of benefits were identified in the first year of implementation. How these benefits might be maintained is a longer-term challenge for participating schools, the NSW Department of Education and Communities and the program owner, Dymocks Children's Charities.

5.1. Benefits and improvements

The question of the sustainability of the program was determined in part by the responses of stakeholders in both interviews and surveys when asked about the benefits of the program. There were also comments about how the program could be improved.

5.1.1. Benefits

High levels of satisfaction were expressed by all stakeholders: principals, students, teachers, parents and school *Book Bank* managers. Right from the start, principals and teachers anticipated the benefits that would flow from children being given books of their own to keep. At the launch of the program in one school, the principal commented that *"…every teacher is sold on Book Bank."*

In addition to enhancing students' engagement with reading, *Book Bank* has also provided a quality resource for students and teachers at school. The extra books given to class teachers to keep in their *Book Bank* become school resources.

Several teachers particularly appreciate the *Book Bank* books as they bring new releases into the class. According to one teacher, they help when *"class library books are a bit stale"*. Another teacher explained, "[*Book Bank*] *bulks up your class library."* Students are exposed to a wide range of quality books because the *Book Bank* catalogue is derived from the PRC booklist which has been selected by experts in children's literature. Principals also agreed that *Book Bank* provided extra resources for reading.

Teacher support for *Book Bank* was unanimous. As shown in Figure 5.1, the teacher survey revealed that 100% of respondents would recommend *Book Bank* to another school, with 80% strongly agreeing.

Figure 5.1: Teacher survey: Recommend participation in *Book Bank* to another school
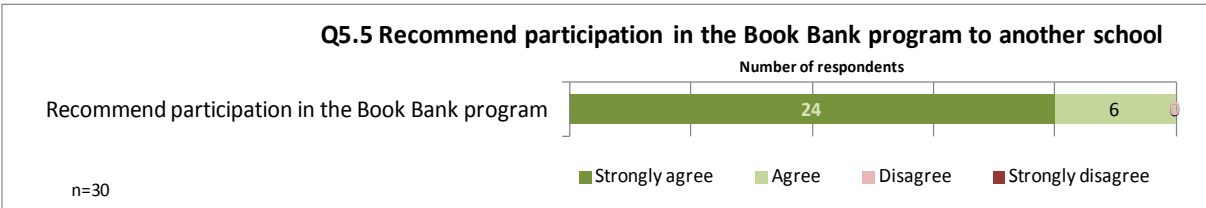
One teacher survey respondent indicated their enthusiasm:

"I would fully support its growth throughout other schools, especially those with kids in need of extra assistance."

Similarly, all teachers indicated in interviews that they wanted the program to continue. They appreciated the flexibility of the program that allowed them to determine how it would operate for their classes, and indicated that they thought *Book Bank* was particularly useful for targeted students or particular groups of students.

One teacher summed it up as "... *part of our teaching."* This idea was reinforced by two principals in interviews:

> *"The staff has taken Book Bank on board and values and appreciates it."*

> *"I think it's been outstanding. You wouldn't say 'no' for the world. Book Bank is promoting literacy. It is definitely contributing, with all our other literacy programs, in a major way."*

One principal interviewed summed up the benefits of *Book Bank* as *"Great for kids in our area".* Another principal was effusive in his praise for the program and its intent:

> *"There's nothing I would like to change. It is running very successfully in the school. The main thing is getting kids switched onto literacy."*

5.1.2. Improvements and suggested changes

Early in the implementation of the program, several changes were made to the ordering and distribution processes, in response to initial teacher feedback. School staff, students and parents were asked if there was anything they would like to change about *Book Bank*.

The following issues and suggestions were identified by teachers, principals and *Book Bank* managers:
- Barcodes similar to those in library books would assist in keeping track of books.
- Use of the word "charity" in the promotion of *Book Bank* was problematic for some. One principal suggested 'Dymocks Book Club Bank' as an alternative title for the program.
- Some teachers were concerned about the Year 3-6 focus of the *Book Bank* model, where composite Year 2/3 classes received only enough books for Year 3 students.
- Some teachers were concerned about the amount of class time used for students to choose their books.
- One teacher suggested that students could make their book choices online.

Students raised issues that concerned them, such as:
- needing the catalogue to provide the number of pages to assist in choosing the right book
- the risk of books getting lost or damaged
- some students have more written comments on the stickers on their books than other students.

Many students wanted more books. One mentioned that it would be good to have extra books for the holidays. Three students commented that no one wrote on their sticker.

Every student interviewed said they would recommend *Book Bank* to students at another school.

5.2. Sustainability

In interviews, principals were asked if the management and operation of *Book Bank* was sustainable. All principals confirmed that they would maintain the operation of *Book Bank* within the school as long as DCC continues to provide the books.

Maintenance of the program will rely on sustaining:
- funding and organisational support required to provide the books
- willingness of individuals to contribute time and effort to manage school-based operation
- support from DEC and DCC to ensure the demands on school staff are reasonable.

5.2.1. Funding and organisational support

Most principals commented that funding for the books by Dymocks Children's' Charities is essential to the continuation of the program.

One principal explained that there are similar organisations that offer books for students, for a fee. She believed that model would not work in the same way as *Book Bank* because school funds would not be available to cover the fees. If parents were asked to pay, according to the principal, there "*would be partial uptake*" and not all students would benefit. Partial uptake would not only directly disadvantage those not receiving books, but the swapping and sharing functions would also be significantly compromised.

5.2.2. School-based support

Two principals indicated that they were prepared to provide time for the school *Book Bank* manager to support the program. One added, *"We find time for things like this."* Another principal explained that "*we may have given away a bit of teaching time"* to run *Book Bank*.

School *Book Bank* managers also commented on the time needed to manage the program. One manager said it was *"OK to give up time to do Book Bank."* Another said she liked her job as manager. She also said that she is involved with *Book Bank* only *"at special times when the new books come."*

The estimated time required to manage the school-based operation of *Book Bank* ranges from 2-3 hours per term for smaller schools to substantially larger blocks of time, especially around ordering and distribution times.

According to one principal, commitment to the program will be maintained if teachers see value for their students. Incorporating *Book Bank* activities into class programs is a sign of the value teachers' place on the program, and increases potential for continued participation.

5.2.3. Program-level support

The DEC and DCC program managers provided support to the pilot schools during implementation. DCC refined the ordering to make the process easier for the school *Book Bank* manager and visited every school to launch the program. The DEC program manager acknowledged the importance of visiting the schools:

> *"The regular visits...give a sense of whether this is actually sustainable and manageable in a small context."*

She said that the sustainability of *Book Bank* in the pilot schools requires support from an area of the DEC aligned with *"something related to books, whether it is the School Libraries team or the PRC, but not tied to a low SES program."*

The current DEC program manager viewed the amount of officer time *Book Bank* requires as a sustainability issue for the maintenance of the program. There is currently one education officer and one clerical person who find *"there is little time to engage in anything other than operational support for the [Premier's Reading] Challenge".* There is currently no capacity to also provide dedicated support for *Book Bank* schools.

5.3. Expansion of the *Book Bank* program

The expansion of *Book Bank* is dependent on the availability of funds to purchase books, and personnel to manage the cycle of book selection, ordering and delivery, as currently provided by DCC. The role of the DEC program manager is to ensure that the program is effective, and support students and the work of schools.

A DEC program manager commented:

> *"If you were going to expand the program you would need someone dedicated full time at DEC and DCC. Things would run more smoothly. They [DCC] were juggling many things as were we."*

Arranging school information sessions for schools new to the program, the launch of the program and visits to monitor implementation, are all time consuming.

An emerging issue for the DEC program manager was the lack of agreement about the process for selecting new schools and decisions around continuation in the pilot schools. Given the significant resource that the program represents, equity of access to the program is a major consideration in offering additional schools the opportunity to be involved. Possible funding sources and models need to be explored, in line with selection criteria for potential participants.

The distribution of books for a larger number of schools was identified as an issue for the program. Currently DCC uses volunteers "*for sorting the books and packing the books into class boxes."* The process also involves inserting the stickers and takes about a week with about 6 – 8 people. There was discussion between the program managers about having DEC staff assist. This has not occurred to date.

At the time of writing this report DCC had extended the *Book Bank* program in the pilot schools to the end of 2012. In addition, two more schools have joined the *Book Bank* program in 2012.

6. Effectiveness of the partnership

As outlined in Section 2, *Book Bank* is an initiative of Dymocks Children's Charities (DCC) working with the NSW Department of Education and Communities (DEC). The Managing Director of DCC was the main manager for the project. NSW Department of Education and Communities (DEC) nominated a program manager to oversee the implementation of the pilot.

6.1. Program development

The *Book Bank* model was designed by the DCC's Managing Director and presented to the Dymocks Children's Charities Board in February 2010. The DCC Managing Director consulted senior officers in DEC who supported the DCC's *Book Bank* model. Following acceptance of the proposal, the DEC provided advice and support for the pilot. Each of the program managers brought particular expertise and objectives to the program.

The DEC program manager supported the exploration of the idea of book ownership and its potential impact on improved reading behaviours at school and at home. The DCC program manager wanted to see a more interactive process involving swapping books and *"sharing of stories".* The DEC program manager described the benefits of these discussions:

> *"As a professional, it was a good experience to have conversations with somebody who doesn't have an educational background …to challenge the things we do as teachers regarding the teaching of reading."*

When interviewed, each of the original program managers stated that they used current research to shape their ideas about how the program could do more than just provide free books for school children. By linking book ownership to class-based activities focussed on reading for pleasure, value is added to the 'life' of each book.

Dymocks Children's Charities requested support from DEC in 2010 to advise on educational aspects and the selection of schools to pilot the program. The DEC contribution to the partnership was to provide expertise on:

- teaching methods to encourage reading
- student book selection strategies
- reading levels
- information about suitable schools for the program.

The operational side of *Book Bank* was the domain of DCC. In interview, the DEC program acknowledged the contribution of Dymocks Children's Charities:

> *"[The] advantages are that we have a funding source, access to books and someone prepared to do the legwork to put that together."*

She commented that *"steering the thinking around the program and setting it up is definitely where the partnership lies."*

6.2. Role of the program managers

The *Book Bank* program has two levels of management: the overall program level and the school level.

The DEC program manager provided advice in relation to the selection of schools, established communication with the chosen schools, and assisted with the implementation of the program.

The DEC established the evaluation of the program in the pilot schools and has a role in responding to the recommendations of the evaluation.

As discussed in Section 4, the school-level operation of *Book Bank* is managed by a member of the school staff, with support from the *Book Bank* team. The delivery of books to schools is the result of a process managed by Dymocks Children's Charities. The school manager and the DCC program manager liaise throughout this process.

The partnership between the DCC and DEC program managers did not have clearly defined roles and responsibilities at the outset of the program. As one of the program managers expressed it, they were *"loosely organised in the beginning".* As a result there were times when, *"identifying whose role was what, was tricky"* particularly in regard to school visits and communication with schools.

The DEC program manager reflected on the importance of her role:

> *"The initial contact with schools and the ongoing support; I see that as being an essential part of the DEC role, getting that bit right."*

As the pilot evolved, the DEC provided support for the program on two levels. Officers at the Curriculum and Learning Innovation Centre (CLIC):

- identified schools to participate in the pilot
- made initial contact with schools
- prepared the annual booklists
- provided suggestions and advice on class activities.

At the school level principals support the program through:

- the management of the ordering process and distribution of the books to students by the school *Book Bank* manager.

DCC program manager coordinates the provision of the books and promotional materials, including:

- development of the program guidelines
- design of *Book Bank* swapping poster, book stickers, display material and book bags for class use
- preparation of the four stage-based catalogues, each semester
- liaison with school *Book Bank* managers around book ordering
- sorting and packaging books for shipment to schools
- organisation of promotional events
- sponsorship funding.

The major ongoing DCC responsibilities include securing the funding for the program, the production of the catalogues each semester and preparation and distribution of the class sets of books.

CLIC sends the list of new releases for the Premier's Reading Challenge (PRC) to DCC annually in October. The DCC sorts the books by publisher and checks availability, before creating each of the four catalogues. The process takes about two weeks.

DCC purchases the books and compiles the sets of books, organised by class and term. The school orders are distributed by DCC and school *Book Bank* managers contact DCC if there are any problems with the books.

At the commencement of the pilot the DCC program manager organised an event for each school. A DCC ambassador launched the program and spoke to students about reading and *Book Bank*. The DEC program manager was present at each launch.

The program managers made several visits to pilot schools, especially early on in the pilot. One school *Book Bank* manager interviewed appreciated the support DCC personnel has provided:

> *"Mel and Jacquie from Dymocks are great. We've done a lot of things with them. They are very supportive if we need extras [books]"*

6.3. Sponsorship

The most effective aspect of the partnership between DCC and DEC was the development of the *Book Bank* model and the implementation of the pilot. The outcome was that over 1100 students received eight books of their own choosing to keep, at no cost to the schools or their communities.

Students are aware that the books are donated. One school *Book Bank* manager commented:

> *"At the beginning of the project we discussed the fact that they were getting the books free."*

One student mentioned how *Book Bank* helps disadvantaged students:

> *"If people are poor, and they have a child who really likes to read, the Book Bank is giving them free books. It makes it a bit fairer."*

One parent indicated the value of *Book Bank* in terms of community engagement,

> *"The money comes from private business and I think that's wonderful that the community is able to contribute to our school."*

7. Summary and conclusions

The evaluation of the Dymocks Children's Charities *Book Bank* program reviewed the first year of implementation, with a focus on the program's impact on student reading engagement and achievement.

This section provides a summary of findings from the five pilot schools. Both qualitative and quantitative components are drawn together to address each of the Terms of Reference below:

1. Assess the impact of the *Book Bank* program on student reading engagement (how long, how often) including:
   - book choice
   - book ownership
   - book swapping and sharing.
2. Assess the impact of the *Book Bank* program on reading achievement.
3. Review the operation and management of the *Book Bank* at school and in class including:
   - book selection and ordering
   - book distribution and management, including when and how books go home
   - links to class and school programs
   - promotion to wider school community.
4. Assess the impact on the *Book Bank* program of key participants including:
   - the *Book Bank* team
   - students participating in the program
   - school staff and community members
   - ambassadors.
5. Assess the scalability and sustainability of the *Book Bank* program.
6. Assess the effectiveness of the partnership model of Dymocks Children's Charities and the NSW Department of Education and Communities.

The *Book Bank* was developed to enhance student engagement and achievement in reading. The model is founded on the understanding, based on research, that book choice and ownership encourage students to read; and that increased engagement with reading enhances reading achievement.

The model requires *Book Bank* to be established in classrooms and integrated into the daily routine of the class. Initially, the books represent a shared resource for the class and are available for swapping amongst students. At regular intervals the students take their books home to keep.

7.1. Impact of the *Book Bank* program on student reading engagement

Book Bank was attributed with increasing reading engagement for most students. Students reported that they read more frequently and enjoyed reading the books from *Book Bank*. Almost all teachers reported that their students showed improved attitudes to reading and were reading more frequently since *Book Bank* was introduced.

Teachers and principals reported that *Book Bank* prompted opportunities for 'reading for pleasure' to be introduced or re-introduced into class literacy programs. Both teachers and parents identified that the program had encouraged students to expand their reading selections.

The impact of the *Book Bank* is well-summed up by one teacher:

> *"The majority of my students have really enjoyed the Book Bank experience and enthusiastically read whenever they get the chance."*

Key features of the *Book Bank* model were found to contribute to fostering student engagement with reading: book choice; book ownership; and swapping and sharing books with classmates.

7.1.1. Book choice

The opportunity to choose a book to read was valued highly by students, both when selecting their own *Book Bank* books and when they swapped their book for another from the class collection.

For many students choosing a book of their own was a new and exciting experience. The most popular basis for choice was a topic of personal interest. Ninety-three per cent reported enjoying the books they chose.

Teachers and school *Book Bank* managers frequently commented that they were surprised at the types of books students chose. *Book Bank* provided teachers with enhanced knowledge of contemporary children's literature and the reading preferences of their students.

In a few cases, parents and students were not satisfied with the book the child received. Factors that contributed to lower levels of satisfaction include:

- students not having the opportunity to choose their own book, as occurred in some classes, especially early on
- the chosen book being too difficult or too easy for the student to read.

The additional books provided to each class enabled students to exchange a book in the rare cases when they didn't like the book they chose. Ninety per cent of teachers agreed that most of their students could independently read the book they had chosen.

Books offered through the *Book Bank* catalogue were valued for their currency and quality, especially by teachers and parents. The quality of the books helped increase students' interest in reading, especially when compared to guided readers. Students were enthusiastic about ordering books from a popular series.

Most teachers rated book choice as a strength of the program, second only to students receiving four books a year to keep.

7.1.2. Book ownership

Students who participate in *Book Bank* for the planned two years are entitled to receive eight books to take home and keep, enabling the establishment of a home library. For some students this was a new experience. Parents spoke about how their children *"cherished"* their books and kept them in special places.

Book ownership was seen as a significant aspect of *Book Bank* for several reasons:

- students were able to read and re-read their books whenever they chose
- students had to carefully consider which books they would select from the catalogue
- students were seen to be taking great care of the books, especially those that belonged to their friends
- some students had not owned a new book prior to *Book Bank*. Often they were *"excited and proud"* when they finally received their books
- taking books home to keep promotes sharing amongst the whole family.

While only a proportion of students in a school participate in the program, the promotion of reading for pleasure extended to students' families.

7.1.3. Book swapping and sharing

Students were able to read other students' *Book Bank* books by 'swapping'. This term was used instead of 'borrowing' to reflect a sense of obligation to the owner of the book. This social aspect of the model is different to the experience of borrowing from the library.

Sharing occurred between teachers and students in the classroom. One teacher referred to sharing as happening *"naturally"* while other teachers set up more formal opportunities, including learning about how to review a book.

Swapping and sharing information about their books promoted students' interest in reading by:
- valuing students' choices of books
- building awareness of the diversity of books available to read
- promoting discussion of shared interests
- assisting in choosing a book to read or select from the catalogue.

Book Bank stickers

The use of the comment stickers in the front of each book was one way of students sharing their opinions of the books they read; however, not all students chose to write comments. Across Years 3-6 approximately 80 % of students did use the stickers. They were not used as frequently by Stage 1 students.

7.2. Impact of the *Book Bank* program on reading achievement

Phase 1 provides qualitative findings related to improved student performance in reading; based on the professional judgement of teachers and, to a lesser extent, the observations of parents.

While NAPLAN reading scores may be examined in Phase 2 of the evaluation, results measuring growth in reading between Years 3 and 5 require participation in *Book Bank* for two years and examination of each student's NAPLAN results in Year 3 and Year 5. As *Book Bank* operates alongside the class reading program and other school initiatives, and student reading achievement reflects the effect of multiple variables, it will be impossible to attribute any improvement in NAPLAN scores solely to *Book Bank*.

In interviews and surveys stakeholders identified how *Book Bank* contributed to student achievement in terms of:
- reading motivation and confidence
- reading skill development
- other aspects of literacy.

7.2.1. Motivation and confidence

The most frequently reported impact of the *Book Bank* program is the increase in students' interest in reading. Teachers identified a level of 'spill over effect' resulting in increased participation in class literacy activities.

As students spent more time reading for pleasure both at school and at home, their confidence was reported to grow. All teachers reported that students' attitudes to reading overall had improved since *Book Bank* was introduced to the class.

7.2.2. Reading skills development

Teachers connected increased interest in reading to reading skill development, highlighting improvements in reading comprehension, oral reading and self-selection of books at an appropriate reading level.

7.2.3. Improvement in other aspects of literacy

A positive impact on speaking and listening, spelling, vocabulary and writing was mentioned by all groups, as follows:

- *Speaking and listening:* improvements were noted in the quality of students' language when talking about texts, and in the frequency of student-initiated conversations about books they have read.

- *Vocabulary and spelling:* reading books from *Book Bank* was seen to contribute to expanding students' vocabulary and, especially for younger students, assisting in reading "*bigger words*". Several students said that *Book Bank* helped make spelling "*easier*".

- *Writing: Book Bank* provided access to a wide range of texts and writing forms, and assisted students with ideas for writing.

- *Learning in all KLAs*: the inclusion of non-fiction books in the *Book Bank* catalogue was appreciated by many students. Reading 'information books' was described by students as helping them to learn new and interesting information. Occasional comments were made about improvements in reading in maths.

7.3. School-based operation and management of the *Book Bank*

A prerequisite of implementation of *Book Bank* in the pilot schools was commitment by the school community to the model, and the establishment of a team to manage the program in the school. In all schools, the key features of the model had been implemented by the second semester of the program. Each school varied the team model to suit its context, and found ways to ensure the program ran smoothly.

7.3.1. Book selection and ordering

Student book choice was a highlight of the program for many participants. The exposure to the *Book Bank* catalogue expanded student and teacher awareness of the range of books available. Several teachers commented that the catalogues provided enrichment for some senior students who chose books suitable for stage 4 students.

Almost all teachers found the book selection process efficient. The student survey confirmed that 88% of students chose their own books. Teachers and school *Book Bank* managers commented that students spent a fair amount of time making their choices.

Few children had difficulty in using the catalogue, although for some younger children the number of titles to select from was daunting. Book selection was more time-consuming for younger students.

7.3.2. Book distribution and management

Class teachers were responsible for the operation of *Book Bank* at class level. School *Book Bank* managers and team members coordinated the ordering and distribution of books and any emergent issues such as providing books for new students.

Twice a year the school *Book Bank* manager spends a significant amount of time coordinating book ordering and distribution. Unfortunately, this takes place at times when teachers are already extremely busy and the process is often rushed.

One *Book Bank* manager estimated that two to three hours per semester was required in coordinating book selection and ordering. Principals acknowledged that the managers often give up some of their own time to run the program.

Ordering

The school *Book Bank* managers collated the orders submitted by class teachers. Some teachers commented on the difficulty of the tight timeframe for students to make their selections and submit the class book order.

Mostly, school *Book Bank* managers were satisfied with the system when the orders were organised by class, rather than by individual student.

Delivery and distribution of books

The revised process of books being delivered to schools in boxes labelled by class and term was seen to work well.

Books were initially distributed to students at presentation assemblies as part of the launch of the program. Some schools continued this process. Others later chose to have books distributed either by each class teacher, or directly to classes by the school *Book Bank* manager.

The extra books (five per class, per term) were used by teachers and school *Book Bank* managers to cater for students who wanted to change their book, or for students new to the school. In one school, the *Book Bank* manager distributed these according to the needs of each class.

Schools need to better understand the DCC's commitment to replacing lost books or providing additional books for new students, rather than use the additional books (extras) as these are provided to increase the books available for swapping.

7.3.3. Promotion to wider school community

Schools commonly found the promotion of the program beyond the school to be difficult. One principal remarked that promotion of the program to parents was "*an area for improvement*".

The *Book Bank* launch was seen as an effective way to introduce the program to the community, especially in the three schools where the ambassadors attended the launch event.

School newsletters were the primary means of informing the school community about the *Book Bank* program. Three schools organised special events to increase awareness of *Book Bank*. These included an evening quiz show, a Book Week parade and special assemblies to hand out new books.

Many teachers reported that parents were aware of *Book Bank*. Most parents who participated in interviews were aware of the key features of *Book Bank*.

One principal was concerned that the program and the engagement of the school community were not acknowledged at the DEC regional level.

7.3.4. Links to class and school programs

The program manager explained that *Book Bank* was intended *"to work alongside"* other programs. Teachers appreciated the extra books from *Book Bank* which arrived with the students' books. Extra books helped build up class libraries as well as improve the range of books students could swap and read.

Twenty-eight out of 30 teachers reported that *Book Bank* supports the school literacy program. *Book Bank* was evident in each of the classes visited during the evaluation. Books were kept on shelves, in folders or trays so they were available for use in class activities or during silent reading time.
At two schools, students also took their books home to read. At the other schools, this varied from class to class.

One parent expressed the opinion that it was teacher direction of *Book Bank* that delivered benefits to students.

Stickers

The use of *Book Bank* stickers by students to write comments was generally valued by teachers and students. 79% of students surveyed had written a comment on a sticker. In the teacher survey 23 teachers out of 30 reported that stickers were being used.

Class poster

A poster was provided to record the books students had borrowed from *Book Bank*. Half the teachers surveyed found the poster useful. Students and teachers liked to keep track of the *Book Bank* books and see what titles were popular.

Some teachers reported that they did not receive a poster.

7.4. Impact of key participants

The *Book Bank* model identifies key figures to support the management of the program in school:
- the *Book Bank* team
- students
- ambassadors
- the DCC and DEC program managers.

Often roles changed during the first year of operation. The aim, in all cases, was to ensure the efficient operation of *Book Bank a*cross all participating classes.

The workload for school personnel and the DCC and DEC program managers changed during the first year of implementation, as the processes became familiar.

7.4.1. The *Book Bank* team

The *Book Bank* model suggested that a team be formed to manage the program in each school. The team would comprise: senior students acting as *Book Bank* managers; a contact teacher; and a community member.

The *Book Bank* team model was modified by all pilot schools. In each case, the teacher took over the role of *Book Bank* manager from students, as the demands of the ordering process could not be met by either students or by the community member. In some cases students assisted in carrying out the

various ordering and distribution processes. More often, senior students took on a role at the class level, assisting with organising the *Book Bank* books and helping other students with book selection and ordering.

Schools were generally unable to find an appropriate community person to help manage and promote the program. However, in all schools, the *Book Bank* manager was supported by other teachers or support staff.

7.4.2.   Students participating in the program

The purpose of involving senior students was intended to provide opportunities to develop leadership skills through the organisation of book ordering and distribution. The program was found to be ill-suited to this intention. Too much support was required from teachers in the book ordering and distribution processes.

7.4.3.   Ambassadors

Prominent personalities such as Ahn Do, Rob Carlton and Adam Spencer promoted reading for pleasure as ambassadors for the program. They visited three schools in person. Two schools outside the Sydney region viewed the presentations via a video link. There was great disappointment expressed by the two schools that did not receive a visit from an ambassador.

In the student survey only 27% of students recalled a "special *Book Bank* activity" at school. However, parents and teachers at schools where an ambassador visited, favourably recalled the impact of the ambassadors.

Students did recall visits by the program managers, and how they were encouraged to read more.

7.4.4.   DCC and DEC program managers

Both program managers visited schools during the first year. In the survey, students were asked about the impact of visitors who came to school to talk about *Book Bank*. 64% reported that after listening to the visitors they would try to read more books. The visitors also encouraged students to read more widely and to read at home more often.

The roles of the two program managers were seen by principals and school *Book Bank* managers as critical to the efficient and effective functioning of the program.

One program manager acknowledged that communication with the schools was a problem because, while it was a joint initiative, the areas of responsibility were unclear.

A clear statement articulating the division of responsibilities between DCC and DEC is now required. Commitment to the program in terms of funding and personnel support is required from both partner organisations.

7.5.   Sustainability and scalability of the *Book Bank* program

After one year of implementation, *Book Bank* was seen to be operating efficiently in all pilot schools. Teachers implemented the program in a variety of ways with their students, and students showed enthusiasm about their books and enjoyed talking about books to classmates.

Each pilot school comes from a low SES community and the funding of *Book Bank* was a key factor is sustaining the program in these schools. Other factors, such as time and personnel required for

management and operation, were gladly supplied at the school level. All stakeholders attributed high levels of student reading engagement to the program.

The pilot identified aspects of the model that needed modification. Improvements made to the book selection and ordering process will make implementation easier for new schools.

The pilot was planned to run for two years, to June 2102, with a view to then expanding the number of schools involved. Expansion will require a commitment of personnel by both organisations, as well as additional funding for the provision of books.

The logistics and costs involved in supplying a larger number of schools is a concern, particularly for the DCC program manager. These will need to be addressed before new schools are brought into the program. The roles of the respective program managers will need clarification as the workload increases.

The pilot school communities appreciated the gift of books for their students. All principals agreed that it was not possible to fund this program from their current school budgets. However, they would continue to commit whatever other resources were necessary, including personnel, to continue the program.

Teachers were highly supportive of the program and indicated their continued commitment.

7.6. Effectiveness of the partnership model

The program has two program managers who represent the partnership between the DEC and DCC. Early in the project, managers worked closely on the implementation of the pilot and visited schools during the first year of operation.

The arrangement enabled the DEC program manager to provide guidance and advice to the DCC program manager during early decision-making. The DEC program manager found that the roles were "*loosely organised*" and responsibilities needed to be negotiated as the program was implemented.

The workload for the DCC program manager involves the periodic development and release of the catalogue, and the ordering and despatch of books to schools. DCC has maintained regular communication with the pilot schools. The role of the DEC program manager diminished following the initial identification of schools and program implementation. The DEC program manager has an ongoing role supporting the evaluation of the pilot.

Development of a formal agreement outlining activities and ongoing obligations of each organisation would benefit both partners.

The development and trial of the *Book Bank* program has delivered thousands of new books to schools at no cost to participants. This generosity is recognised by the DEC and the pilot school communities.

8. Preliminary recommendations

Preliminary recommendations, based on Phase 1 of the evaluation are listed below. These will be augmented and amended following the second round of data collection and analysis.

1. Review the roles of *Book Bank* team members.

1.1 The management of the program at school level requires the ability to communicate with all levels of the school community. This role is best held by a member of the teaching staff. It is appropriate that this role is supported by at least one other staff member, especially in larger schools.

1.2 Leadership opportunities for interested senior students may include: speaking to the school community about *Book Bank* events; presenting information about ordering books; writing reports for the school newsletter or website; visiting classrooms to gain feedback on the program for the school *Book Bank* manager.

1.3 Engage several members of the school community to promote the aims of the program at parent meetings and *Book Bank* events, and support the school manager as required.

2. Improve information provided to teachers and other school staff.

2.1 Provide parents with information about the aims and operation of the program at the beginning of each school year and at other time such as when students are choosing their books, when the books are distributed and when they are taken home to keep.

2.2 Teachers require clear advice about the aims of the program and some ideas for implementation, including "*success stories*", suggestions for helping students select books and strategies for sharing.

2.3 Provide regular reminders of the program's commitment to replacing lost books and providing books for new students.

3. Provide a *Book Bank* ambassador for every pilot school.

3.1 Encourage and assist remote schools to identify a local personality to be an ambassador. This should be someone who is familiar with the context of the school and demonstrates a commitment to reading books.

3.2 The connection between the school and the ambassador should be refreshed each year as new students join *Book Bank*.

4. Review the target age groups for the *Book Bank* program in relation to composite classes.

4.1 Suggest strategies to ensure the all students in multi-age or multi-stage classes are able to participate.

5. Promote connections between *Book Bank* schools and classes

5.1 Provide a forum for feedback and sharing between *Book Bank* schools. The DEC learning tool *blog*ED has the capacity to provide an appropriate forum and may be set up by individual schools.

5.2 Provide information on the DEC website about which books were '*hot picks'* (popular choices) for students and parents.

6. Strengthen links between the school library and the *Book Bank* program.

6.1 Promote sustainability of the effects of the program on student reading engagement by involving senior students in school literacy-based events prior to high school entry.

6.2 Encourage use of the Premier's Reading Challenge list of new releases to acquire books for the school library.

7. Clarify the roles of the program managers

7.1 Identify areas of responsibility and establish a decision-making process for making changes to the program and the selection of schools.

7.2 Determine the protocol for communicating with schools about *Book Bank*

7.3 Establish effective lines of communication between DEC and Dymocks Children's Charities.

Glossary

TERM	DESCRIPTION
AECG	Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Inc. (NSW)
AEO	Aboriginal Education Officer
Ambassador	A high profile individual who promotes reading through the *Book Bank* program to students and the wider community (e.g. Ahn Do and Adam Spencer)
Assessment	Method of evaluating student performance
Benchmark	Standard against which performance is measured
Best practice	Judgement of a particular practice against a stated benchmark
Book Bank	Students in years 3: 6 are provided with a book of their own each term for reading, sharing and swapping. http://www.bookbonus.org.au/AboutBookBank.aspx
Book Bank school team	The *Book Bank* model includes a school team made up of student *Book Bank* managers, a staff support person (school *Book Bank* manager), and a parent community support person.
Book Bonus	*Book Bonus* is a fundraising partnership between participating schools and Dymocks Children's Charities to raise funds for new books for each school and for *Book Bank* through sponsorship of individual students in the PRC. (http://www.bookbonus.org.au/)
DCC	Dymocks Children's Charities
DEC	Department of Education and Communities (from April, 2011)
DET	NSW Department of Education and Training (prior to April 2011)
Effective	Producing a desired result
Efficient	Well organised; achieving result with minimal resources, time and effort
EMSAD	Educational Measurement and School Accountability Directorate
Engagement	Student engagement in learning is identified by on-task behaviours that signal a serious investment in class work (Professional Support and Curriculum Directorate, 2003).
NAPLAN	National Assessment Program Literacy and Numeracy
OC	Opportunity classes for gifted and talented students in Stage 3 provided in 74 schools in NSW.
PEC	Program Evaluation Committee [of the Office of Schools]
PERG	Program Evaluation Reference Group

TERM	DESCRIPTION
PRC	Premier's Reading Challenge
Priority Schools Program	Schools which serve communities with the highest concentrations of low socio-economic status families and are identified by a voluntary and confidential survey of families every four years.
SED	School Education Director
SES	Socio-economic status
SLSO	School Learning Support Officer
SMART	School Measurement, Assessment and Reporting Toolkit
Teaching sequence	Units contained within a specific program working together to achieve overall effect
Strategy	Action to achieve a goal in a particular program
ToR	Terms of reference

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Appendix 1: 2011 survey results

STUDENT SURVEY 2011

Item 1.1 - The name of my school is __

Student respondents by school	Number of respondents	Percentage of total respondents
Condell Park PS	224	43%
Ettalong PS	59	11%
Fort Street PS	32	6%
Nyngan PS	20	4%
Toormina PS	182	35%

Item 1.2 - I am in ___

Year of respondent	
Year 2	8%
Year 3	21%
Year 4	19%
Year 5	18%
Year 6	34%

Item 1.3 - I am a ___

Gender of respondent	
Boys	48%
Girls	52%

Item 1.4: Are you a member of the *Book Bank* team at your school?

Book Bank team member	
Yes	35%
No	27%
I Don't know	38%

Item 2.1: How often do you read just because you want to?

Frequency of reading for enjoyment	
Every day	46%
2 or 3 times a week	31%
About once a week	12%
Hardly ever	10%

Item 2.2: Did you enjoy the book you received from the *Book Bank*?

Enjoyment of the book received from *Book Bank*	
Yes	93%
No	7%

Item 2.3: When you talk about your book to others, does it make you want to read more books?

Sharing and interest in reading	
Yes	72%
No	28%

Item 2.4: Did you choose your own book from the *Book Bank* list?

Student choice of book from *Book Bank* list	
Yes	88%
No	12%

Item 2.5: Why did you choose that book?

Reasons for choosing the book	
Because it was about a topic that interests me	58%
Because I liked the description from the list	25%
Because it had pictures	15%
Because my friends recommended it	10%
Because a teacher recommended it	5%
Because I liked the picture on the cover	28%
Because I knew I could read it without help	24%
Because it was written by an author I liked	22%

Item 2.6: Do you have *Book Bank* sharing time in your class?

Book Bank sharing time	
Yes	69%
No	31%

Item 2.7: Does talking about the *Book Bank* books in class help you choose a book to read?

Sharing in class and book choice	
Yes, it helps a lot	41%
Yes, it helps a little bit	36%
No, it doesn't help at all	5%
No, we don't talk about our books	18%

Item 2.8: What did you do with the book you received from *Book Bank* last time ___

Ownership of the book from *Book Bank*	
I didn't get a book last time	10%
I took the book home to keep	51%
I left the book at school	32%
Other	7%

Item 3.1: Do you swap or borrow books from *Book Bank*?

Swapping or borrowing from *Book Bank*	
Yes	75%
No	25%

Item 3.2: How often do you swap or borrow books from *Book Bank*?

Frequency of swapping or borrowing	
When I've finished a book	80%
Once a week	11%
Once a month	9%

Item 3.3: Who helps you swap books from the *Book Bank*?

Help with swapping the book	
My teacher	25%
The librarian	9%
My classmates	23%
A student who helps run *Book Bank*	4%
A teacher from another class	3%
Someone from my family	3%
A school parent or helper	4%
Nobody	41%

Item 3.4: When do you read books from the *Book Bank*?

Times of reading the book	
In class time	83%
During recess or lunch	5%
During library time	9%
During *Book Bank* sharing time	16%
After school	22%
At night	27%

Item 3.5: Where do you read books from the *Book Bank*?

Where books are read	
At school	88%
At home	44%
Before or after school care	6%
Other	8%

Item 3.6: Have you written a comment on a sticker in the book from *Book Bank*?

Writing comments on the *Book Bank* sticker	
Yes	79%
No	21%

Item 3.7: Do you think writing a comment about the book on the *Book Bank* sticker is a good idea?

Book Bank sticker comments are valued	
Yes	65%
No	35%

If 'Yes' please say why___

Item 4.1: Do students help run *Book Bank* at your school?

Student involvement in running *Book Bank*	
Yes	34%
No	17%
I Don't know	48%

Item 4.2: Have there been any special *Book Bank* activities at your school?

Special *Book Bank* activities at the school	
Yes	27%
No	73%

If 'Yes' please write what happened.

Item 4.4: Has anyone visited your school to talk about *Book Bank*?

School visitors to talk about *Book Bank*	
Yes	86%
No	14%

Item 4.5: After you listened to the visitor, what did you think that you would do?

Special *Book Bank* activities at the school	
Try to read more books	64%
Get help when my book is hard to read	13%
Read different kinds of books	42%
Read at home more often	27%
sNone of the above	7%

Item 4.6: Did the *Book Bank* at school make you more interested in reading books?

Impact of *Book Bank* on interest in reading books			
Impact of *Book Bank* on interest in reading books, by Stage	Pre-Stage 3	Stage 3	All
Yes	89%	86%	87%
No	11%	14%	13%

Appendix 1: 2011 survey results

TEACHER SURVEY 2011

Item 1.1: The name of my school is___

Student respondents by school	Respondents	Percentage of total
Condell Park Public School	8	26.7%
Ettalong Public School	8	26.7%
Fort Street Public School	2	6.7%
Nyngan Public School	6	20.0%
Toormina Public School	6	20.0%

Item 1.2: My role at school is best described as___

Role at school	
Class teacher	23
Teaching executive	6
Non-teaching executive	1

Item 1.3: I have been working at this school for___

Working at this school for	
This year only	6
1-3 Years	3
More than 3 years	21

Item 1.4: I am currently teaching___

Currently teaching	
Stage 1/2	4
Stage 2	9
Stage 2/3	1
Stage 3	13
Other	3

Item 1.5: I have been using *Book Bank* with my students for___

Using *Book Bank* For	
This year only	10
This year and last year	18
I am in a non-teaching role	1
I have not used *Book Bank* with my students	1

Item 2.1: My students needed assistance choosing their first book from catalogue this year___

Needed assistance	
Strongly Agree	2
Agree	13
Disagree	14
Strongly disagree	0
Not applicable. I have not implemented the *Book Bank* with a class this year.	1

Item 2.2: Most students chose a book that they could read independently___

Read Independently	
Strongly agree	8
Agree	19
Disagree	2
Strongly disagree	0
Not applicable. I have not implemented the *Book Bank* with a class this year.	1

Item 2.3: Students read books from *Book Bank* ___

Read books from *Book Bank* during	
During silent reading time in class	26
During 'free' time in class	24
During library time	0
During *Book Bank* Sharing	12
During recess or lunch	4
Outside school hours	13
Not applicable. I have not implemented the *Book Bank* with a class this year.	2

Item 2.4: I use *Book Bank* in my classroom___

Book Bank in my classroom	
As a free choice activity i.e. reading for pleasure	2
As silent reading e.g. DEAR, SSR	9
As part of my teaching program for reading	2
As silent reading and as part of my teaching program for reading	2
All of the above	13
Not applicable. I have not implemented the *Book Bank* with a class this year.	2

Item 2.5: My students swap or borrow books from *Book Bank*___

Swap or borrow books	
More than five time a term	9
Three to five times a term	9
One or two times per term	9
Not at all	0
Not applicable. I have not implemented the *Book Bank* with a class this year.	3

Item 2.6: Student read the sticker inside each book and write comments___

Read the sticker and write comments	
Strongly agree	9
Agree	14
Disagree	4
Strongly disagree	1
Not applicable. I have not implemented the *Book Bank* with a class this year.	2

Item 2.7: The *Book Bank* poster which records books my students have read has been helpful___

Book Bank Poster	
Strongly agree	4
Agree	12
Disagree	8
Strongly disagree	1
I did not receive a poster	3
Not applicable. I have not implemented the *Book Bank* with a class this year.	2

Item 2.8: Student ownership of books is an important part of *Book Bank*___

Ownership of books	
Strongly agree	20
Agree	7
Disagree	1
Not applicable. I have not implemented the *Book Bank* with a class this year.	2

Item 2.9: I have been effectively supported to implement *Book Bank* with my students___

Support to implement *Book Bank*	
Strongly agree	10
Agree	14
Disagree	3
Strongly disagree	1
Not applicable. I have not implemented the *Book Bank* with a class this year.	2

Item 2.10: One or more students in my class are involved in the organisation of *Book Bank*___

Students involved in the organisation	
At class level	14
At school level	2
Not involved	10
I don't know	1
Not applicable. I have not implemented the *Book Bank* with a class this year.	3

Item 2.11: The following are strengths of the *Book Bank* program based on my experience___

Strengths of *Book Bank*	
Students receive four books per year to read and take home to keep	27
Students are given access to books that are included on the list for the Premier's Reading Challenge	22
Students choose their own books	26
Students can write comments about books on the sticker inside each book	15
Students talk about their books with their classmates	22
Books are shared within the class	24
The program has been promoted by popular identities	9
Not applicable. I have not implemented the *Book Bank* with a class this year.	1

Item 3.1: Students are enthusiastic about reading books from the class *Book Bank* ___

Enthusiastic about reading books	
Strongly agree	17
Agree	13
Disagree	0
Strongly disagree	0

Item 3.2: Please write the reasons for your response to the statement above___

Item 3.3: The attitude of students to reading has improved since they received their first book from *Book Bank* this year___

Attitude of students	
Strongly agree	13
Agree	17
Disagree	0
Strongly disagree	0

Item 3.4 - Students read more frequently since we have had *Book Bank* in the class (including books from places other than *Book Bank*)___

Students read more frequently	
Strongly agree	15
Agree	13
Disagree	2
Strongly disagree	0

Item 3.5: *Book Bank* has contributed to students' reading skill development___

Reading skill development	
Strongly agree	12
Agree	17
Disagree	1
Strongly disagree	0

Item 3.6: The impact of *Book Bank* on student's reading behaviour is evident through ___

Impact on students' reading behaviour	
Students borrow more frequently from the school library	5
Students demonstrating increased self-initiated reading for pleasure	23
Students demonstrating increased participation/self confidence in reading activities	15
Students selecting more complex and varied reading materials	19
None of the above	0

Item 3.7: The aspect of *Book Bank* which most supports student's engagement with reading is___

Students' engagement with reading	
Students receive a book that they can keep	24
Students choose which book they get to keep	22
Students write comments about a book on the sticker inside the cover	9
Students talk with others about the books they have read	13
Students can swap *Book Bank* books in their class	20
None of the above.	0

Item 4.1: I am part of the *Book Bank* team___

Part of the *Book Bank* team	
Yes	4
No	26

Item 4.2: I have been involved in discussions about the implementation of *Book Bank*___

Involved in the implementation of *Book Bank*	
Yes	20
No	10

Item 4.3: Are any parents / school community members involved in the organisation of *Book Bank*___

Involved in the implementation of *Book Bank*	
Yes	6
No	24

Item 5.1: The *Book Bank* program at my school has been managed effectively___

Management of *Book Bank*	
Strongly agree	16
Agree	14
Disagree	0
Strongly disagree	0

Item 5.2: The book selection process for *Book Bank* has been efficient___

Selection process is efficient	
Strongly agree	11
Agree	18
Disagree	1
Strongly disagree	0

Item 5.3: *Book Bank* supports the school literacy program___

Book Bank supports school literacy program	
Strongly agree	15
Agree	13
Disagree	2
Strongly disagree	0

Item 5.4: Most parents know how the *Book Bank* program works at our school___

Parents know how the *Book Bank* program works	
Strongly agree	7
Agree	14
Disagree	7
Strongly disagree	2

Item 5.5: I would recommend participation in the *Book Bank* program to another school___

Recommend participation in the *Book Bank*	
Strongly agree	24
Agree	6
Disagree	0
Strongly disagree	0

Appendix 2*:* Qualitative evaluation schedules 2011

Interview Questions

Students

1. How does the *Book Bank* work at your school?
2. Who organises *Book Bank* in your school?
3. Have you had any visitors come to school to talk about reading and *Book Bank*?
4. What do you like about *Book Bank*?
5. What helps you learn to read and become a better reader?
6. Is there anything you would like to change about *Book Bank*?

Teachers

1. How does the *Book Bank* work at your school?
2. Does *Book Bank* have an impact on your students' engagement with reading? How?
3. Do you think *Book Bank* helps your students improve their reading?
   How? How do you know?
4. Who organises *Book Bank* in your school?
5. Have you had any visitors come to school to talk about reading and *Book Bank*?
6. Would you like *Book Bank* to continue at your school? Why?

Principal

1. How does the *Book Bank* work at your school?
2. Who organises *Book Bank* at your school?
3. Have you had any visitors come to school to promote *Book Bank*?
4. Has *Book Bank* had a positive impact on teaching practice in reading/literacy?
5. Does *Book Bank* have a positive effect on reading engagement for all students?
6. Do you think *Book Bank* helps your students learn to read and become better readers?
7. Please outline any other benefits of the *Book Bank* program for your school.
8. Are there any issues associated with *Book Bank*?
9. Is the management and operation of *Book Bank* at your school sustainable?
10. Would you like *Book Bank* to continue at your school? Why?

Parents

1. Do you know about *Book Bank*? Tell me what you know.

2. Do you think *Book Bank* has increased your child's interest in reading?

3. What helps your child learn to read and become a better reader?

4. Have any visitors come to school to talk about reading and *Book Bank*?

Book Bank team

1. How does the *Book Bank* work at your school?

2. What is your role?

3. Have you had any visitors come to school to promote *Book Bank*?

4. Would you like *Book Bank* to continue at your school? Why?

DCC and DEC Program Managers

1. What are the essential elements of the *Book Bank* program?

2. What research informed the design of the program? Is *Book Bank* modelled on any other programs? If so, what are they?

   Book Bank was designed to promote reading engagement in terms of students choosing to read more often, read for longer periods, read more widely and make positive comments about books and reading.

3. What evidence is there, in the feedback you have obtained from schools, that there have been positive changes in student engagement with reading? What comments have schools made about the effectiveness of the *Book Bank* model, i.e. book choice, book ownership, book sharing (talking about books) and book swapping?

4. Is there any evidence that the sticker provided for writing comments has contributed to student engagement with reading?

5. What evidence is there, in feedback you have obtained from schools, that there has been a positive impact of *Book Bank* on student reading achievement?

6. Please give details of any changes to the operation of *Book Bank* that have occurred during the implementation of *Book Bank* in particular schools or with particular processes.

7. How have you supported schools in the operation and management of *Book Bank*?

8. Are there any issues for DCC/DEC with the organisation and management of *Book Bank,* including issues for particular schools? Please outline.

9. Who are the key participants in the pilot schools? Have there been any changes to the key roles identified in the original design?

10. What has been the impact of the *Book Bank* ambassador in the pilot schools?

11. What feedback have you received from the *Book Bank* managers/team about their impact on *Book Bank*? Have you considered any changes? If so, please explain.

DCC and DEC Program Managers

12. How many schools, teachers and students were involved with *Book Bank* in 2011? Have there been any changes in 2012?

13. Please describe the workload for the program manager in terms of personnel and time involved.

14. Please identify any issues of sustainability for the *Book Bank* program that you envisage.

15. Is the *Book Bank* model suitable for expansion? In what ways?

16. In what ways is it unsuitable?

17. What would be required in terms of personnel and funding?

Are there any other aspects that need to be considered?

18. What were the steps in the development of the design of the program and your role in the decision making?

    At what point was the partnership with DBB/DEC established?

19. What are the strengths of the partnership between Dymocks Children's Charities and the NSW Department of Education and Communities?

    What are the weaknesses?

20. The *Book Bank* catalogue is updated annually to link to the list of books for the Premier's Reading Challenge.
    What are the advantages and disadvantages for Dymocks Children's Charities and DEC with this arrangement?
    What could be improved?

21. Outline any advantages or disadvantages of the partnership model that was set up. Describe your degree of satisfaction.

22. What has your organisation planned for *Book Bank* beyond the end (Semester 1, 2012) of the pilot?

23. Is there anything you would like to add?