Toy Libraries Australia

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10 years of impact

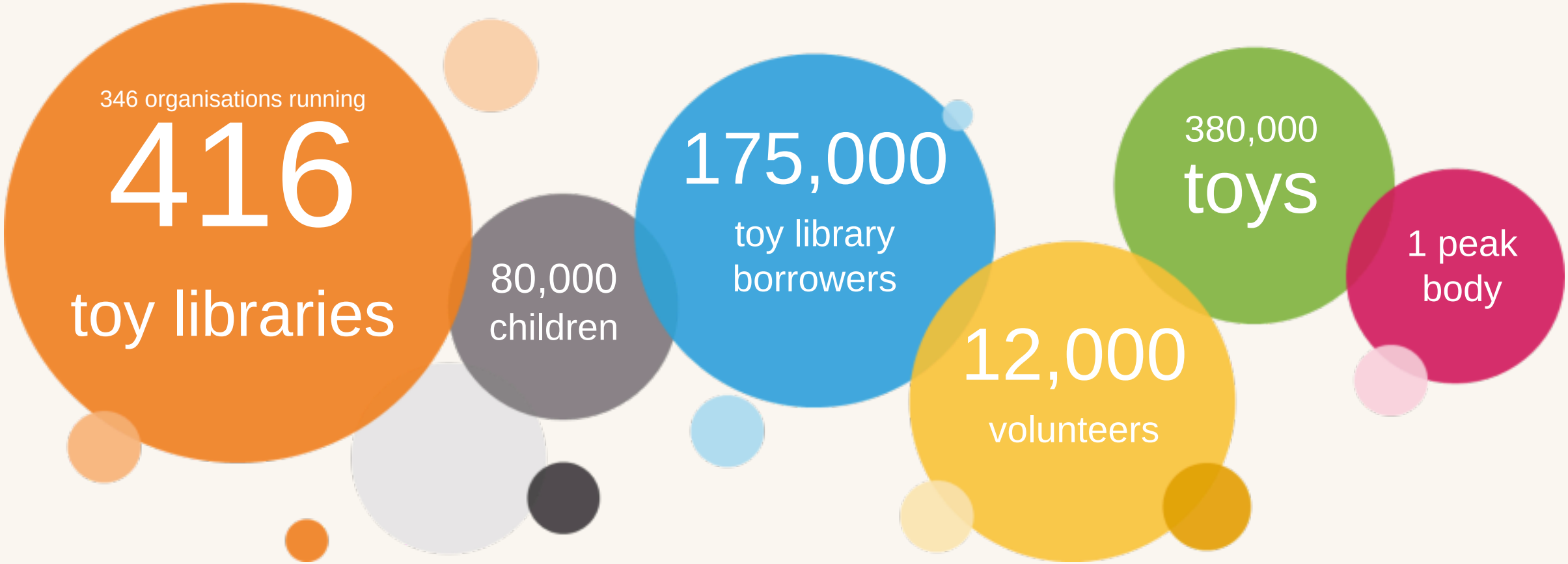
Valuing Play:

Economic Evidence for Toy Libraries' Impact



Debbie Williams
and Suzi Young

Snapshot of toy libraries in Australia



Source: Toy Libraries Australia, 2026

Benefits of toy libraries

Reduced cost of living
Inexpensive access to toys
More money for essentials
Volunteering pathways to work
High social return on investment

Community connection
Soft entry points to other services
Friendship, peer advice and support
Inclusion – dads, grandparents, people with disability, migrants
Mental health benefits





Less waste
Resources shared by many families
Durable toys last longer
Toys donated, repaired and reused
Teach circular economy principles

Play-based learning
Developmentally appropriate toys
Parents engaged as first educators
Families encouraged to play together
Enhanced home-learning environment

Developmental concerns and disability inclusion

Toy libraries are becoming more inclusive and accessible



Soft entry point

Accessible, welcoming place to get peer advice for parents with concerns on their child’s development, helping them identify and navigate service options



Mainstream service

A place- and strengths-base service which integrates children with disability as equals and promotes learning in everyday environments



Whole family wellbeing

Supports parents and siblings to connect and play with the broader community beyond disability, building resilience and wellbeing .



Save money

Cost effectively provides the resources needed to enhance the home learning environment to support therapy goals and changing developmental needs.

Research partners and methodology

Consultants

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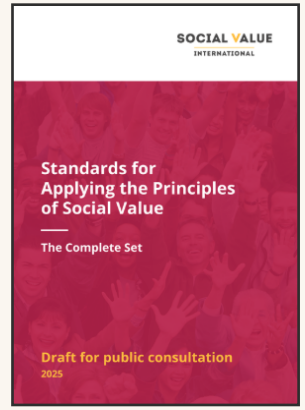
Funder

Australian Government

Department of Health, Disability and Ageing

Methodology

SOCIAL VALUE INTERNATIONAL





S ocial

R eturn

O n

I nvestment

A way to measure and describe **the social, environmental, and economic value** created by a social service by converting outcomes into **a dollar value**.



The SROI approach captured peoples' experiences

We engaged with the following stakeholders:

- 4 toy libraries hosted visits to talk directly to members and volunteers
- 3 online focus groups to capture regional and other diverse perspectives
- 300 parents and carers responded to the survey
- 133 volunteers responded to the survey



What was considered in developing the model?

How many people experience the change?

What is that change worth?

How much can we claim?

Deadweight, attribution, displacement and benefit period

For every dollar invested in TLA toy libraries $4.22 of social value is being created

SROI ratio

Value of change	$95.1m
Inputs	$22.6m

÷ =

$4.22

Value experienced by 5 groups children, parents and carers, committee volunteers, environment, government

9000+ volunteers contribute to toy libraries

Sensitivity analysis: $3.05 to $4.90

Who is benefiting

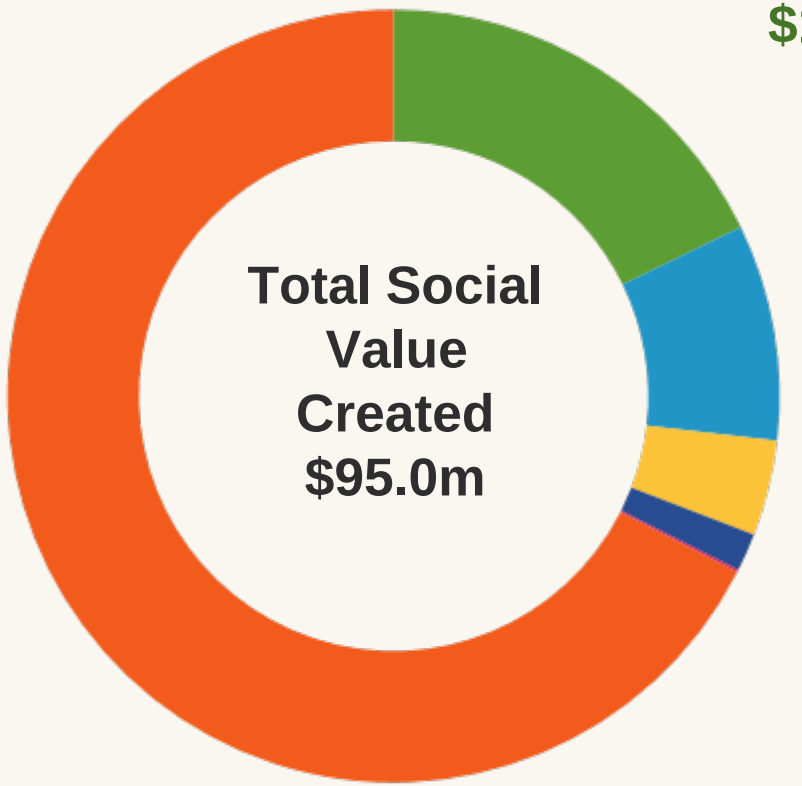
Parents 18%

5 outcomes experienced by nearly 35,000 parents and carers

- 47% of value through financial savings from buying less toys
- 28% increased joy

Parents and carers
$16.9m

Children
$64.1m



Children 67%

Experienced by over 49,000 children

- 55% increased joy
- 45% contribution to early years learning outcomes

Committee volunteers
$8.6m

Community volunteers
$3.8m

Government
$1.5m

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$11 of social value
is created for every dollar invested in toy libraries
by governments

How value flows to children – contributing to early years learning

Improved gross and fine motor skills

Improved ability to share and care for the property of others

Improved social connections

Contribution to early years learning outcomes

> My daughter absolutely loves going to the toy library and I think it also has taught her to really look after the toys and to share toys really well.
>
> *Toy library parent*

19% surveyed parents and carers reported receiving a recommendation from their toy library to visit another early-years' service



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Wish we'd known about this amazing service earlier and have told everyone who will listen about its benefits – not just for our family, but financially and environmentally too.

Toy library parent



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> The toy library is a place where I don't need to think about the stressful things in life and I can just focus on volunteering and helping families. [Without it] I would just overall be less happy and motivated as a result
>
> *Toy library volunteer*

Toy libraries have made a huge positive difference! It makes our days happy as we always have fun and engaging toys to play with.

Toy library parent



Benefits for families and children with disability

11% of parents and carers surveyed identified as having one or more children with a disability or development concern

“I don’t have the financial means to go out and buy hundreds of dollars worth of sensory toys, so the toy library has been a really great way for us to be able to give those things to our daughter.”

Toy library parent of a child with disabilities

Questions?


LARGE TOYS
A1 - ACTIVITY CENTRES
- WALKERS
- BOUNCERS
LARGE TOYS
G2 - OUTDOOR GAMES
- SAND/ WATER PLAY
- CUBBY HOUSES
- FOAM STRUCTURES
- SLIDES
- CLIMBING FRAMES
TRAMPOLINES

How we are using the research

Advocacy with government

Grant applications

Motivate our volunteers

Social media and promotions

Focus Toy Libraries Australia’s work

Help toy libraries identify improvement opportunities



Let’s keep the conversation going…

Debbie Williams

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Champion of Endless Opportunities

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