

## Stock quality health check – summary information

### Background

The New South Wales Public Libraries Stock Quality Health Check (SQHC) is a practical tool which enables public libraries to undertake an assessment of the relevance, depth and range of collection stock in relation to the communities they service. The adult fiction stock quality health check took place in 2011, with the one for children and young adult fiction in 2012/13.

*Opening the Book* created a methodology for the Stock Quality Health Check in the UK for the Audit Commission, the Department of Culture, Media and Sport and Arts Council England. This project is loosely based on this idea, and was informed by a detailed evaluation of the health check which took place in the UK.

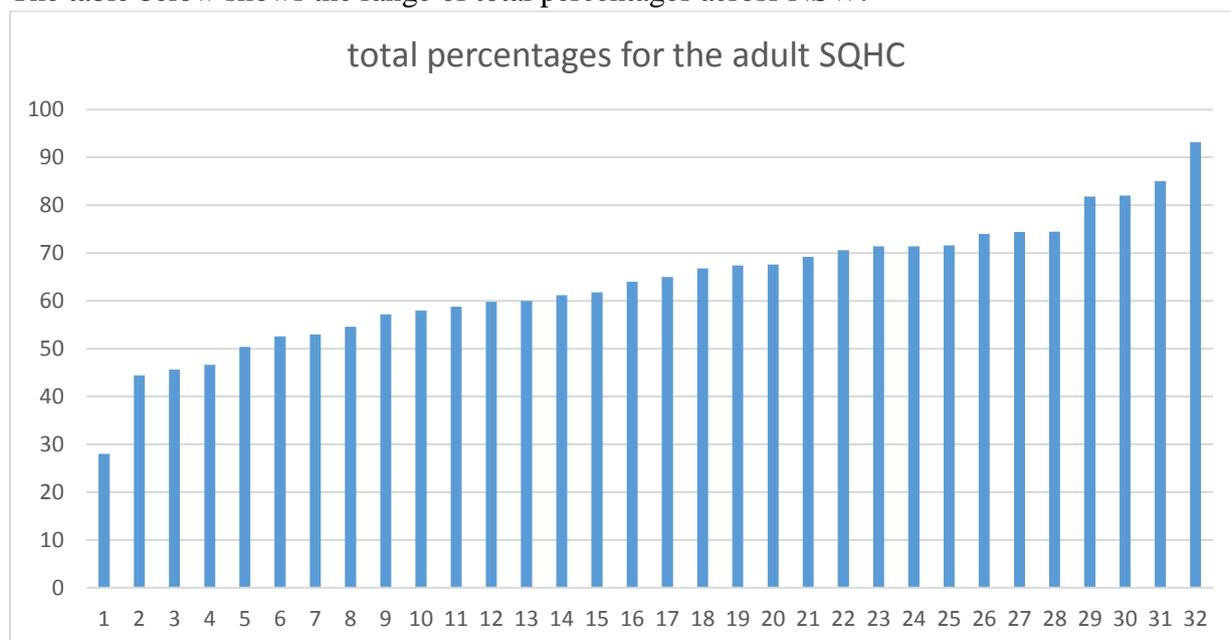
### Adult Fiction

#### Methodology

The adult fiction Stock Quality Health Check consists of five hundred titles which are representative across designated areas of reading interest which indicate the breadth and depth of an adult fiction collection in New South Wales. They are indicative titles rather than prescriptive, and the titles should not necessarily be seen as a list for purchase. Each author has only one title in the list. Detailed information about the methodology is in the full document.

When the adult fiction stock quality health check was available as a spreadsheet, 32 libraries across NSW participated. Thirteen of these were libraries from the metropolitan area, while the other nineteen were from country areas, including five regional libraries. This state wide participation was impressive for a first time use of a new assessment tool.

The table below shows the range of total percentages across NSW.



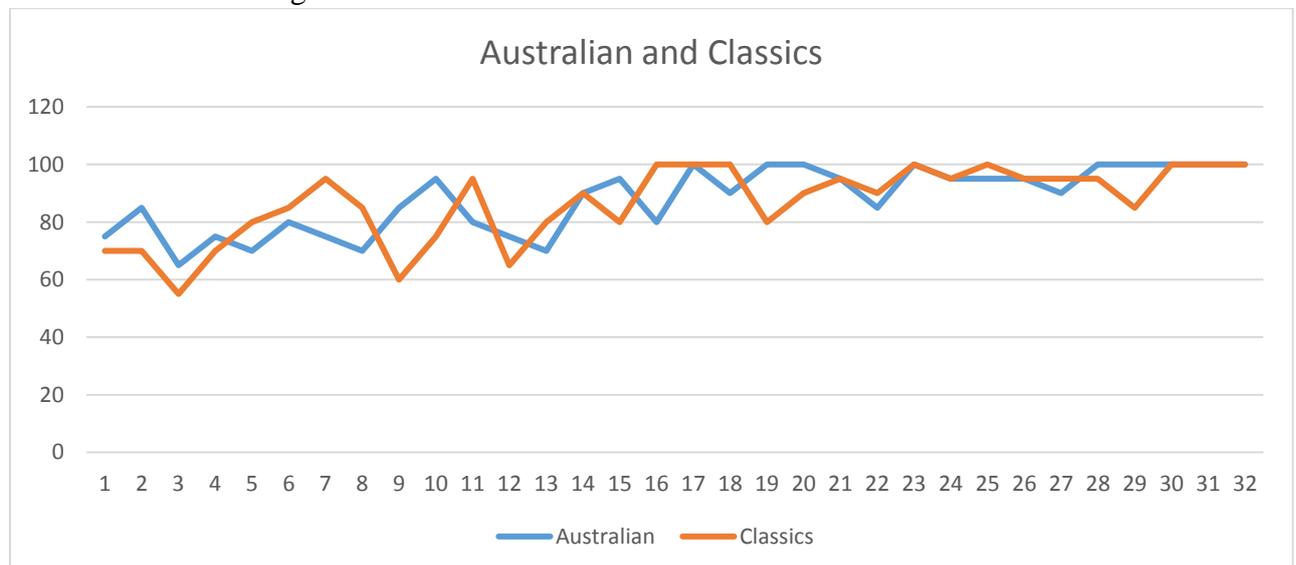
### How did the categories rank?

From the highest to the lowest scoring categories, for state wide figures it was:

- Australian 87.8%
- Classics 86.7%
- Chick lit 79.7%
- Action/adventure 78.1%
- Historical 77%
- World fiction 76.5%
- Thriller 75.9%
- Crime/mystery 74.3%
- Contemporary fiction 73%
- Family sagas 70.1%
- Military/war 64.7%
- Humour 61.9%
- Fantasy 61.5%
- Indigenous 55.6%
- Romance 53.8%
- Short stories 51.8%
- Horror 50.2%
- Science fiction 47.6%
- Paranormal romance 42.5%
- Gentle reads/Inspirational 40%
- Gay and lesbian 33.1%
- Westerns 29.7%

The chart below shows both Australian 87.8% and Classics 86.7%, the highest ranked titles by holdings, that some libraries held one hundred percent of the titles. This is not surprising data, neither is the fact that both of these areas has consistently high scores across many libraries.

For each of these categories the lowest score was 55% for Classics and 65% for Australian.



When libraries checked their holdings for the stock quality health check it was a format neutral check. If the title was held in any format (provided it was an unabridged version) it could be counted.

The Indigenous category, as well as the Paranormal Romance, Gentle reads/inspirational and Gay and lesbian were the only categories to have no holdings in a least one library. Some of the categories only had ten titles (most had at least 20, while others were larger).

The categories were not all of the same size. Some only contained ten titles, and two categories contained sixty. This was an aim to best represent collection mix. This mix will need to be looked at the next time this is done.

The number of titles is listed next to the state wide percentage of holdings.

- Australian 87.8% 20 titles
- Classics 86.7% 20 titles
- Chick lit 79.7% 20 titles
- Action/adventure 78.1% 20 titles
- Historical 77% 20 titles
- World fiction 76.5% 20 titles
- Thriller 75.9% 10 titles
- Crime/mystery 74.3% 60 titles
- Contemporary fiction 73% 20 titles
- Family sagas 70.1% 20 titles
- Military/war 64.7% 20 titles
- Humour 61.9% 20 titles
- Fantasy 61.5% 40 titles
- Indigenous 55.6% 10 titles
- Romance 53.8% 60 titles
- Short stories 51.8% 10 titles
- Horror 50.2% 20 titles
- Science fiction 47.6% 40 titles
- Paranormal romance 42.5% 10 titles
- Gentle reads/Inspirational 40% 10 titles
- Gay and lesbian 33.1% 10 titles
- Westerns 29.7% 20 titles

While the Australian category only had 20 titles, Australian authors were represented through the other categories as well, so the total number of Australian works was much higher than it first appears.

Paranormal, Gentle reads/Inspirational and Gay and lesbian all received low scores for holdings across NSW.

### **Children's and Young Adult Fiction Stock quality health check**

This followed the adult fiction stock quality health check and took place in 2012/2013. A similar methodology was used so that five hundred titles which are representative across designated areas of reading interest were selected. They are indicative titles rather than prescriptive, and the titles should not necessarily be seen as a list for purchase. For these titles authors could appear in more than one category. This was decided because a smaller pool of writers contribute to this content. The titles had to be written for children and young adults, and not be titles written for adults.

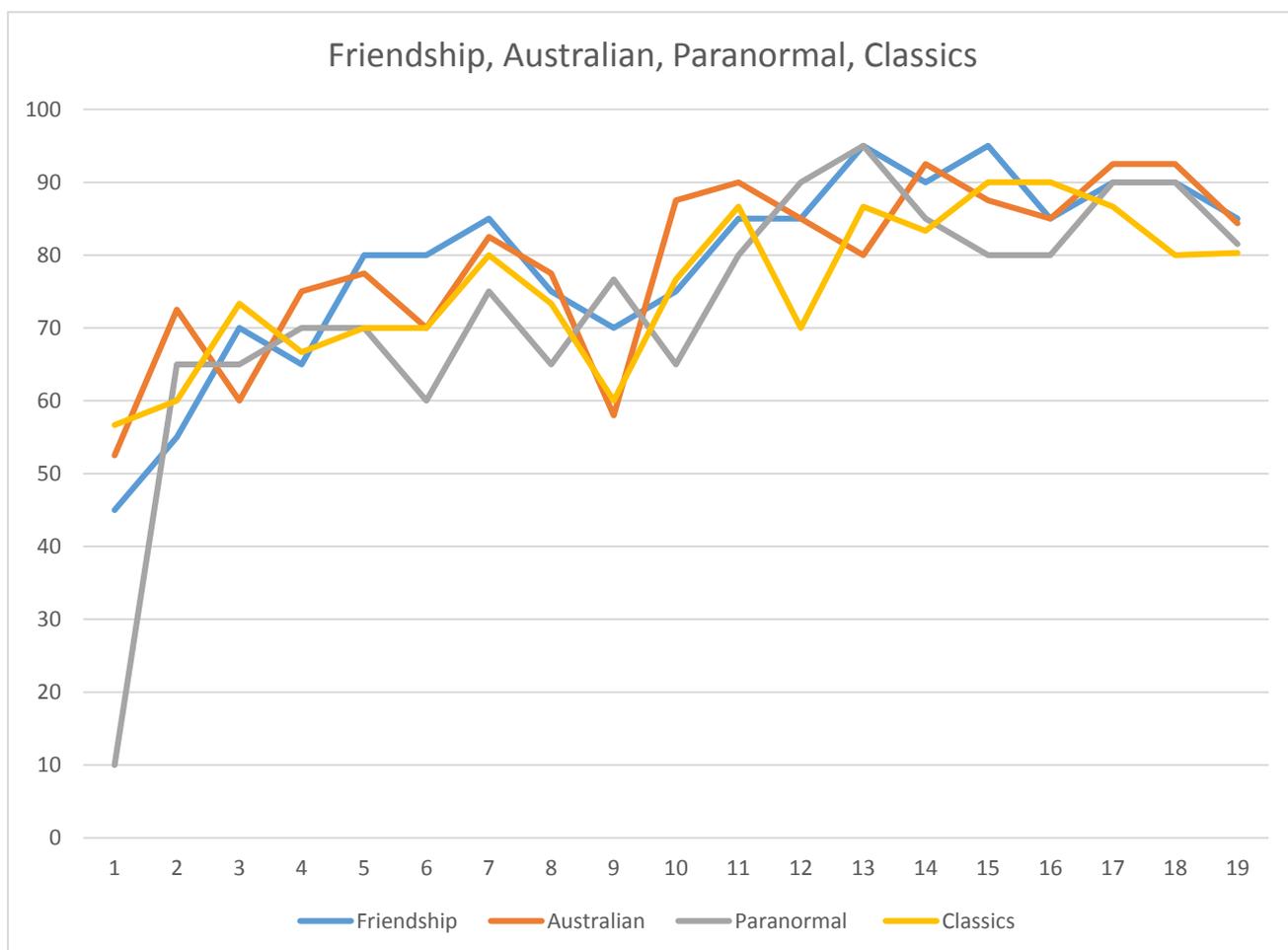
When the children's and young adult fiction stock quality health check was available as a spreadsheet, 18 libraries across NSW participated. Five of these were libraries from the metropolitan area, while the other fifteen were from country areas, and four of these were regional libraries.

### **How did the categories rank?**

From the highest to the lowest scoring categories, for state wide figures it was:

- Friendship 85%
- Australian 84.3%
- Paranormal 81.5%
- Classics 80.3%
- Humour 78.3%
- Fantasy and magic 77.7%
- Series 77.4%
- Animals 77%
- Indigenous 76.9%
- War and conflict 76.5%
- Adventures 76.5%
- First experiences 75.4%
- Realism, life issues 75.1%
- Sport 72.2%
- Family 68.2%
- Historical 62.7%
- Romance 61.8%
- Science fiction 58.12%

The chart below shows that Friendship 85%, Australian 84.3%, Paranormal 81.5% and Classics 80.3% were consistent higher scorers across most libraries (except for one library and paranormal).



Series holdings were shown as very strong in a small number of libraries, way ahead of their other holdings. Series were treated differently in the stock quality health check, based on advice from the working group. While for all other categories specific authors and titles were listed, for the series category, the series alone was listed. These are very large series, written by multiple authors, and it was felt that this method of listing would provide the most accurate measure for breadth and depth of series holdings

The categories were not all of the same size. One only contained ten titles, and two categories contained fifty. This was an aim to best represent collection mix.

The number of titles is listed next to the state wide percentage of holdings. From the highest to the lowest scoring categories, for state wide figures it was:

- Friendship 85% 20 titles
- Australian 84.3% 40 titles
- Paranormal 81.5% 20 titles
- Classics 80.3% 30 titles
- Humour 78.3% 30 titles
- Fantasy and magic 77.7% 50 titles
- Series 77.4% 20 titles
- Animals 77% 40 titles

- Indigenous 76.9% 30 titles
- War and conflict 76.5% 20 titles
- Adventures 76.5% 50 titles
- First experiences 75.4% 20 titles
- Realism, life issues 75.1% 30 titles
- Sport 72.2% 20 titles
- Family 68.2% 30 titles
- Historical 62.7% 20 titles
- Romance 61.8% 10 titles
- Science fiction 58.12% 20 titles

From the highest to the lowest scoring categories, for state wide figures for both stock quality health checks, combining the lists it was:

- [AF Australian 87.8%](#)
- [AF Classics 86.7%](#)
- CYA Friendship 85%
- CYA Australian 84.3%
- CYA Paranormal 81.5%
- CYA Classics 80.3%
- [AF Chick lit 79.7%](#)
- CYA Humour 78.3%
- [AF Action/adventure 78.1%](#)
- CYA Fantasy and magic 77.7%
- CYA Series 77.4%
- CYA Animals 77%
- [AF Historical 77%](#)
- CYA Indigenous 76.9%
- CYA War and conflict 76.5%
- CYA Adventures 76.5%
- [AF World fiction 76.5%](#)
- [AF Thriller 75.9%](#)
- CYA First experiences 75.4%
- CYA Realism, life issues 75.1%
- [AF Crime/mystery 74.3%](#)
- [AF Contemporary fiction 73%](#)
- CYA Sport 72.2%
- [AF Family sagas 70.1%](#)
- CYA Family 68.2%
- [AF Military/war 64.7%](#)
- CYA Historical 62.7%
- [AF Humour 61.9%](#)
- CYA Romance 61.8%
- [AF Fantasy 61.5%](#)
- CYA Science fiction 58.12%
- [AF Indigenous 55.6%](#)
- [AF Romance 53.8%](#)

- AF Short stories 51.8%
- AF Horror 50.2%
- AF Science fiction 47.6%
- AF Paranormal romance 42.5%
- AF Gentle reads/Inspirational 40%
- AF Gay and lesbian 33.1%
- AF Westerns 29.7%

It shows some significant differences between the two stock checks. The Indigenous title holdings in children's and young adult titles are significantly higher than the Adult Fiction. It also highlights the broader collection range of adult fiction title, which had both higher and lower percentages of holdings than the children's and young adult titles.

1

---

<sup>1</sup> This report was written in 2014, by staff at the State Library of NSW