

Marketing at Melbourne

Helen Hayes runs an active ongoing campaign in her university library

It is essential that libraries project a positive, dynamic image both to their own 'parent' organisation and the wider community. The reality of being a service-orientated organisation in touch with user needs must be matched by the perception of our users if we are to be effective. Libraries must be highly regarded and seen to be integral to the aims of the organisation of which they are a key part.

In May 1993, I reported to *inCite* on the University of Melbourne Library's Public Relations Program. Since then, these programs have been further enhanced and developed, and the Library continues to place considerable emphasis on our marketing strategies. These programs are driven by a small Public Relations committee which meets weekly to review publicity and promotional opportunities.

In 1994 a half-time appointment was created to assist with the program and to edit library publications, in particular *Ex Libris*, a monthly newsletter which is widely distributed on campus, and the more scholarly biannual *University of Melbourne Library Journal*, which contains substantial articles relating to the Library's collections and services. Regular contributions to other on-campus publications help to raise awareness of the Library's collections and services.

The Library conducts annual surveys to obtain information about how users perceive the Library. These are conducted on a rolling three year cycle, covering undergraduate students, academic staff and postgraduates in turn. In 1993 we surveyed academic staff using an instrument developed by Professor Mairéad Browne from the University of Technology, Sydney, and the results of this survey are due to be published in May. In



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1992, undergraduates were surveyed, and later this year we will survey postgraduate students.

In addition to information obtained from surveys, we analyse suggestions and comments made by students on our 'Feedback Board' in the Library foyer, on which students are invited to write any comments they wish about our services, facilities and collections. The Library's responses are pinned on the board as quickly as possible and once a year all responses are analysed for common themes in areas of concern. Action taken to address these is reported back to the students through the publicity program.

The Library also keeps in direct contact with its academic users. Senior Library staff meet informally over a sandwich lunch with selected key academics to discuss matters of interest or concern to them about the Library. New senior academic staff are welcomed in this way and all new staff receive a letter of welcome from the University Librarian. Meetings are also held with interested groups on the campus such as college librarians, the chairpersons of library user groups, the Committee convocation and student representatives. The strategic plan provides a particular focus for these meetings.

The strategic planning process has been an excellent means of raising the profile of the Library. Through a joint Library/Faculty approach to the development of strategic planning objectives and priorities a better understanding has been gained of faculty needs and the Library's role in achieving them. As a result, all faculties are working collaboratively with the Library towards the agreed objec-

tives, and many jointly funded projects have been established relating to facilities, equipment and services. For example, in 1993/94 the Arts Faculty and the Library jointly developed a computer aided instruction program to teach citation skills to all first year English students.

Another important part of the Library's public relations program is our cultural program. The Library continues to offer a year-long series of quality exhibitions of items from the collections, which are launched at high-profile Library functions involving faculty staff and invited guests. The Library also provides a venue for book launches and important academic and student services programs.

We provide an important focus for University-wide activities such as Orientation Week and Discovery Day, offering a broad range of Library displays, tours and activities. In July, we plan to offer a 'Library Week', aimed primarily towards undergraduate students, but including others from throughout the University community. It will be a celebration of all of our Library activities, focusing on staff, students, collections, services and special features in a judicious blend of the serious and frivolous.

The initial impetus for Library Week came from a member of the cataloguing staff, and more than fifty programs for the week have been contributed by volunteer members of the Library Week Committee. This indicates our success in involving a broad cross-section of staff in public relations, and the significance of the program to individual staff as well as to the Library as a whole. ■