



Destination Information Librarians are trained to be your walking, talking maps.



Australian
Library and
Information
Association

The public library as signpost

A descriptor of everywhere you've been and a pointer to everywhere that's possible

In 1994 the Australian Bureau of Statistics released *Cultural trends in Australia: A statistical overview*. The report stated that public libraries are the most used cultural facility across the nation. Forty-four per cent of the population were not surprised because they already know that access to information services makes a valuable contribution to their lives. The gauntlet is down. Public libraries and school libraries are uniquely placed to cast a net over the other 56 per cent – take these ideas and see who you catch!

- Public libraries that have a local studies librarian could arrange heritage walks/tours which focus on examples of different styles of housing over the years; important features in a local cemetery; an historically significant house; an interesting Church (with, perhaps, a meeting with Church personnel to talk about the history of the Church). Tours could end up in the library with the staff showing resources in the local studies collection.
- Arrange a series of photographic displays which could be seen in the public library, loaned to schools, displayed at the local pool or in shopping centres. Prepare information leaflets about particular photographs or particular themes listing the sources of information found in the library on this subject.
- Prepare a collage of information about a particular era (for example, the 1950s) with extracts from the papers of the day, photographs, items of clothing, information about wages, or transport. Link this with the information sources in the library. Invite teachers to give their children a project relating to that period or invite senior groups in for a discussion.
- If you don't already do it, provide access to Council information through the library. Promote the fact that Council forms are available, carry council brochures, set aside a specific place for council papers. After all, the library is open much longer than Council and can easily be a pick up or drop off point.
- Hold a series of talks and demonstrations on the Internet targeting different age groups. Show what it can be used for, try to demystify the telecommunications debate and put the library into the global context visually and through demonstration.
- Form effective partnerships. Talk to the local RSL about the 50th Anniversary of World War II and offer to assist them with information and photograph displays. Talk to local health providers and offer a venue for community health talks. Link up with local business and professional groups with offers to talk about issues such as the Internet or business/management resources in the library. Work with local real estate agents assisting them to research a particular house or piece of land (this could attract a fee).
- Prepare a 'day in the life of...' showing information used during that day to raise awareness of the role that it plays in our everyday lives, for example: a professional person, a school child, a politician – from reading the contents of the breakfast cereal to the solution of personal information needs... demonstrate how libraries can provide access to information. Prove the relevance of libraries!

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