

Form *does* equal function

Sunshine Coast University Library

Heather Gordon, director of information services

Handsome, assertive, engaging, strong, sophisticated, tropical literacy at its best, these are some of the observations of students, architects, and the public when describing the new library building at the Sunshine Coast University College. The building design reflects the spirit of adventure and excitement created by the establishment of the new, independent public university that opened at Sippy Downs on Queensland's Sunshine Coast in February 1996. With a functional brief prepared by library building consultant, Dr David Jones and the Library Advisory Group; architects Lawrence Nield and Partners and John Mainwaring and Associates, have created a visually appealing, light-filled, and functional home for the university's library and information technology services.

As the only building located just off centre of the campus's linear courtyard, the library is placed to significantly contribute to the life and character of the university. A three storey building of approximately 3200 square metres of usable space, the library has been designed to facilitate access to information in all formats — print, electronic, multimedia. The building is currently open sixty-seven hours per week during semester; can accommodate 80 000 print volumes; and has capacity for forty computer workstations giving access to the library's catalogue, CD-ROM networks, and the Internet.

Entry to the library is from an expansive timber verandah on the first level. Most of the library's service points are conveniently located on the entry level including: loans, reference, reserve, casual reading and study areas, a computer laboratory, a disabilities support room, and staff areas for library and information technology services. Leading to the second floor, the main staircase provides a wonderful view of the campus down to the Mooloolah National Park. The second floor, flooded with natural light during the day and with reflective ceiling light at night, is an inviting place from which

to access the majority of the library's print collections. The second floor also offers an expansive open space with a variety of reader seating including carrels, tables, and group study rooms most of which include power and data access for clients' laptop computers. Located on the ground floor level are administration offices, more open reader seating, group study rooms, a seminar room, and gallery space for lectures, exhibitions, and public performances.

The interior design of the library is colourful and inviting with primary colours of blue, red, and ochre. The rich tones of jarrah and Queensland maple, used in all furniture and joinery, provide a classic look. All furniture and joinery were custom-built for the building to meet the ergonomic and technological needs of the modern library. Large works of art, placed strategically throughout the library, make it a vital and popular place on campus for study, learning, and teaching. To date the building has won several local and state design awards, and is entered for competition in the national Royal Australian Institute of Architects awards. Working on the design and development of the building has been a challenging and rewarding endeavour. Library staff can take great pride not only in the design of the building, but also with developing the intellectual content of strong library collections and services. As a new and emerging library, our goal is to stimulate and give access to ideas and information that contribute to the university's scholarly communication. The building provides the perfect structure for this ambition.■



Night-time view of the first and second level from the verandah of the Sunshine Coast University Library

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For details please contact
Ian McCallum

on (02) 6247 4089 or email at
ian.mccallum@alianet.alia.org.au