

Celebrity librarians

Ros Dorsman, chief librarian, Bathurst City Library



New South Wales Senator Sue West (deputy president of the Senate) and library member, Nicola Rybanczyk, using an Internet public access point during Australian Library Week 1997

Celebrate Australian Library Week; show what you can do; weave the web of information for your community. This is what ALIA encouraged us to do. The challenge was how to find something which would capture the imagination of those who need a nudge into the library world.

At Bathurst City Library we tried 'C is for celebrity'. Prominent local celebrities were invited to spend about an

hour at the library as volunteer staff. Almost everyone who was asked agreed to do their stint, and a few became so engrossed in their work that they stayed longer and offered to return.

Who came? Politicians — Federal Senator Sue West, our Federal member Peter Andren, the mayors and some councillors from both local government areas served by the Bathurst City Library, two retired but very active sen-

iors, a musician, newspaper editor, a school librarian, and more.

As the purpose of the week was to raise consciousness as well as have some fun, each 'celebrity librarian' had a quick guided tour, basic lessons using the computer system in the workroom, and then, coached by their library staff 'shepherd', they were let loose at the circulation desk. Each wore a rosette, and there was a sign at the desk identifying the celebrity of the hour, so that there were no embarrassing questions about who was serving the public. Each received a library 'showbag' with information and gifts.

The media, who had also been invited to volunteer, picked up the story and gave the library publicity on radio, television and in print. We used the ALIA Library Week publicity releases and tips from the Lobby for libraries workshop as background for our own media kits.

Library staff also organised displays, internet demonstrations, and the writing competition *Libraries change lives* which was sponsored by Southern Scene Booksellers.

Did the promotion work? Well, the library did get an increase in its budget for the next year. Would we do it again? Yes. As far as we can tell, our celebrity program was a first for any library, although we readily admit that some other organisations — such as Macdonald's Family Restaurants — have done it before. ■

Libraries: pathways to knowledge

Australian Library Week, 3–9 May 1998

Australian Library Week 1998 is fast approaching. Don't miss this opportunity to promote your services. The 1998 theme, *Libraries: pathways to knowledge* offers terrific opportunities for the promotion of awareness of the role and function of libraries, in a wide, community-based context. Promotional material is being designed based on the theme, as well as a number of sub-themes — *Pathways to understanding; Pathways to creativity; Pathways to fun*

— and more. Which pathway will you take?

The ALIA National Office will be preparing posters, stickers, balloons and postcards celebrating Australian Library Week 1998, as well as a variety of press releases and kits to help you plan your week. Contact us for further information. An order form for promotional material will be available in the January 1998 issue of *inCite*. So don't miss out on this great bumper edition. ■