

Celebrating libraries

Library and Information Week 2001

The following pages contain many of the success stories from Library and Information Week 2001. Libraries from all sectors and from all parts of the country participated in the week.

The schedule of 'days' provided unique opportunities for libraries to highlight their services, thank their volunteers, and generally promote themselves.

The event kit, produced with support from rowecom Australia, proved invaluable to many libraries and is an initiative that is sure to be carried on into future Library and Information Weeks.

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The press coverage for the week around the country was impressive. There were at least 150 newspaper articles, along with 8 radio interviews, and numerous television stories.

Planning for Library and Information Week 2002 has begun already. We welcome feedback from all members on how we can make Library and Information Week even better. ■

Australia has quality access to information...

Australians are among the luckiest in the world when it comes to both access to information and protection of their rights to that information. This was the consensus of a panel of speakers at a *Freedom of information forum* held on the Gold Coast on 14 May as part of Information Rights Day during Library and Information Week 2001.

More than fifty residents attended the forum, which was addressed by an impressive panel of speakers. Mr Brian Lovi, the freedom of information co-ordinator for the Queensland Justice Department, spoke on the Queensland's *FOI Act* and every citizen's right to information under the Act.

However, he highlighted how people could greatly enhance the response to their requests by detailing the specific documents or records they were seeking, and how they wanted to use them.

'The FOI Act covers releasing existing material — not generating a new document to answer a specific request,' he said.

'Whether at a national, state or local area, people can ensure they get the best possible response by making their requests clear and specific, and even by getting advice from the relevant FOI officer first,' he added.

Other speakers included:

- Ms Heather Douglas, the administrative review officer for the Office of the Information Commissioner (OIC), who spoke on *The role of the Office of the Information Commissioner* and how it was linked with freedom of information as well as broad information and commercial rights;
- Ms Anne Horn, the executive manager at Queensland University Library, who's topic was *'The moveable feast that is information — rights, equity and access'*. She addressed concerns about the own-

ership of information, the increasing number of amalgamations among some of the world's largest publishers, and how the cost of accessing information was increasing dramatically;

- Professor Mark Pearson, the head of journalism at Bond University, whose topic *Legal pitfalls for writers* dealt specifically with issues facing the media to ensure information was available to the community and
- Ms Tabitha Bonney, Barrister at Law and investigator for the Australian Consumer and Competition Commission (ACCC) who spoke on *Information and commercial rights* and the role the ACCC plays in ensuring consumers were protected from being given misleading information about products and their warranties.

The Freedom of Information Forum was held at the Runaway Bay Library and was the initial launch of Library and Information Week. There were various other activities throughout the service on this day as well as a special display at Mermaid Waters to show the diversity of information available at the libraries.

Beenleigh Library launched a month-long exhibition of the City's Millennium Photographs, featuring the faces, places and special events that made the Year 2000 so memorable.

As part of an almost \$36 500 contribution Gold Coast Friends of the Library presented each of the City's fourteen library branches with a Lego Fun Centre, to provide a fun and educational experience for young children on their library visits. Genealogical computers for Southport and Beenleigh libraries are also included in the assistance package.



'Doc' the emu meets his fans at Southport Library

Beau Clark Photography

The City Council said 'thank you' to the Friends of the Library and up to 300 volunteers who assist in the City's libraries with a special morning tea at the Burleigh Waters Library on Wednesday 16 May.

All Gold Coast libraries joined the National Simultaneous Storytime for a simultaneous reading of *Edward the emu*, by Sheena Knowles. But the event had special significance at Southport where the emu was real. Queensland's favourite live emu, 'Doc' welcomed children in the library courtyard and members of Gold Coast Little Theatre enacted the story. The event also featured Tracey Fleming from Channel 10's children's show *In The Box*. More than 270 children across the Gold Coast Libraries attended storytimes at the various branches.

Online Day featured special interactive internet sessions at the Robina Library, as well as two presentations of 'Create-a-card' to help residents use modern technology to create cards of all sorts. An interactive session by senior students from several schools was also held in a bid to find some of the most interesting internet sites for teenagers.

In addition to the activities above, the Gold Coast Libraries website was specially prepared and focussed on library week. This year was our best ever Library and Information Week and we look forward to planning an even bigger week next year. ■