

[PUBLIC]

LOTE outreach to housing estates

Vivienne Archia and Marcia McGinley, Yarra-Melbourne Regional Library Corporation

The Yarra-Melbourne Regional Library Corporation includes within its boundaries most of Melbourne's high-rise public housing estates. These estates house some of Melbourne's most socially-disadvantaged residents.

The 'LOTE outreach to housing estates program' sought to build a link between the residents of these estates and their local libraries. Through weekly visits, assistance with services and resources for adult education, and weekly bilingual storytimes, the program encouraged estate residents to take advantage of the services available in their local libraries by building an environment of trust and support.

The library formed close partnerships with a range of agencies which were already working on the estates. In

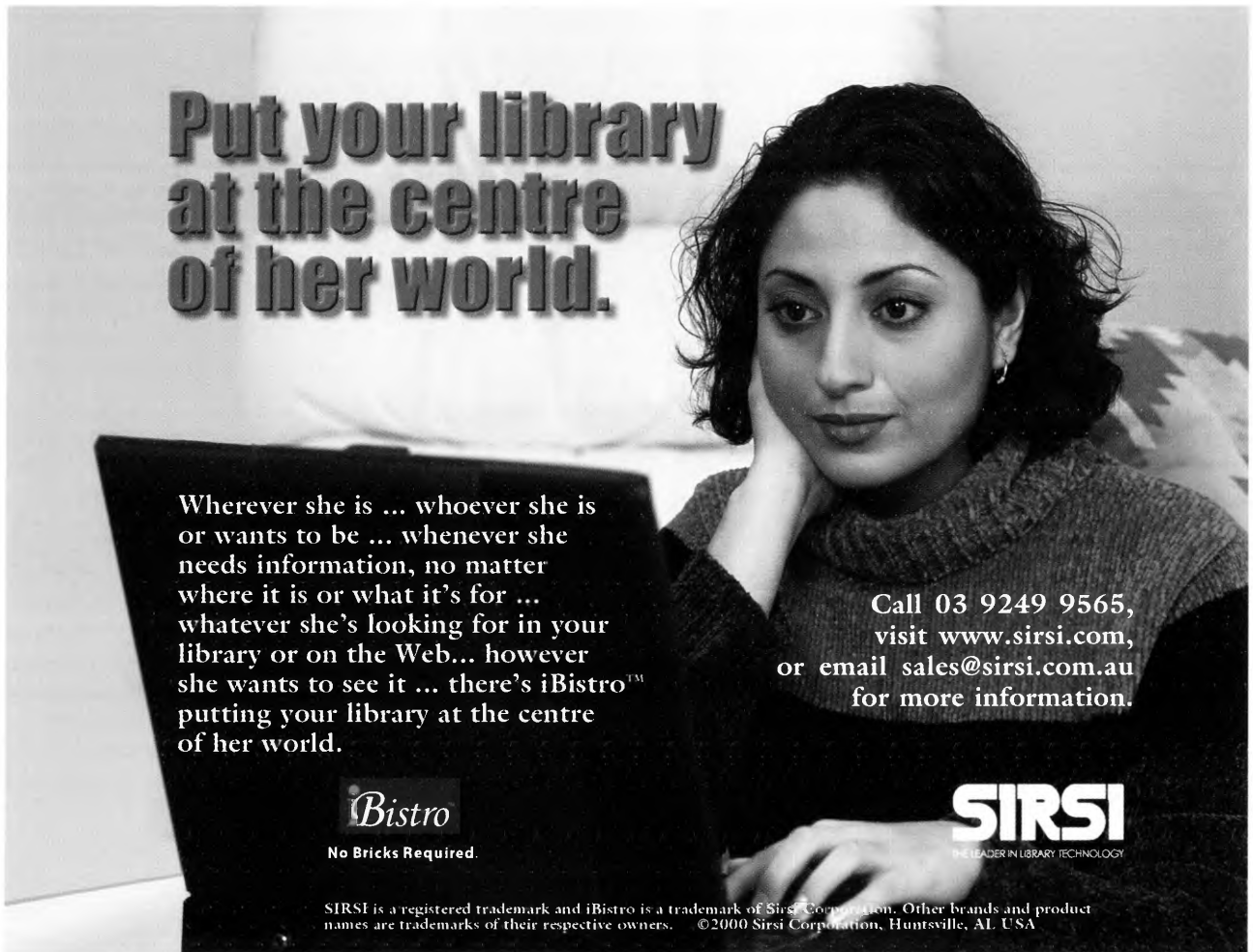
particular, consultation the program's planning phase with the co-ordinator of the Collingwood Neighbourhood House and the Belgium Avenue Neighbourhood House, co-ordinators of the adult education program at Richmond library, and the community development officer appointed to the Collingwood estate by Jesuit Social Services, ensured that a quality outreach program for people from non-English-speaking backgrounds was developed.

Library staff with relevant language and cultural backgrounds were recruited for the program. Each staff member was briefed on issues that may arise, and the types of special needs that they may encounter on the estates. The staff involved have indicated that one of the most exciting aspects of the project is the sense of teamwork that

comes when staff share a common goal.

This innovative project has been extremely successful in raising the profile of the library and its services to the residents of the estates. It has been of major benefit to community groups which had been identified as having special needs. The library is bringing services back to the estates — reversing the trend of recent years. The partnership has been characterised by good communication, goodwill, generosity and optimism.

In presenting the ALIA Awards for Innovation [Public], we congratulate Vivien Archia and Marcia McGinley for their outstanding work in bringing the community and the library together, and in creating an environment of familiarity and trust. ■



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