

Have a one night stand with a book

Moreland Library Service celebrates Valentines Day

Moreland's Library Service celebrated Valentine's Day with a difference by tempting library users to have a 'One night stand' or a 'Blind date' with a book!

On Valentine's Day, all five Moreland libraries hung large red hearts with the messages 'Have a blind date with a book' or 'Have a one night stand with a book' above a display of books neatly wrapped in newspaper with their bar-codes written on a small red heart pasted on the front.

The books included all genres except romance — otherwise many people would not have borrowed anything for fear that they would end up with a 'mushy love story'! Signs around the library tempted readers to take home a blind date that might be: a bit mysterious; a little wicked and part of the criminal underworld; a bundle of laughs or such a sad case that you need the tissue box; floating in fantasy or full of facts; full of Aussie flavour; a blast from the past or utterly irresistible.

Borrowers of these books received chocolate hearts when they came to the loans desk. Staff had a wonderful time promoting the display throughout the day and library users enjoyed the concept and congratulated staff for hosting such a fun event.

Only novels and biographies in English in standard print had been selected but due to the interest of older and LOTE readers, staff quickly wrapped up large print books and books in other languages to give to these readers. One thrilled Greek borrower declared that her husband had

not given her anything that day but she was going home to show him up with her chocolate from the library and spend the night with her 'blind date' instead!

The idea for Valentine's Day was inspired by libraries in the United Kingdom who have hosted 'Blind date' and 'One night stand' sessions, although such events there have been longer term programs not connected with Valentine's Day. In order to promote reader development, Rachel Van Riel from *Opening the Book* instigated the initiative in libraries as a hook to tempt readers to try books they would not normally pick up to introduce them to new authors and genres. Reader development is an exciting movement in the United Kingdom which aims to develop and broaden people's reading interests through proactive intervention.

Other libraries in the United Kingdom have tried similar schemes. These include 'Risk it for a biscuit' where readers receive a biscuit with any wrapped book they borrow for their 'bravado', and 'tempting takeaways' where readers borrow a bag of unknown books sealed in takeaway food carrier bags.

Moreland library staff and readers have said 'more please' and so our next mystery/surprise book program will be 'Risk it for a biscuit' later in the year followed by... well that's a surprise!

Genimaree Panozzo, Moreland community relations librarian

Moreland City Libraries serve a diverse population of more than 13 000 people over an area of 51 sq km in Melbourne, Victoria. Suburbs include Brunswick, Coburg, Fawkner and Glenroy. Forty-five per cent of Moreland residents speak a language other than English. There is an ageing population in the North. The Library has five service points and employs seventy-three staff with the equivalent full time of 48. It lends 1.7 million items each year.



A Greek library user takes home her 'blind date'

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