

At last!

Peter Fraser, City Library, Melbourne

At last, Melbourne has a free lending library in the city. 'Fantastic concept! Fantastic collection! Fantastic location!' has been the public response.

Until 31 May, Melbourne was the only Australian capital city without a public library in its central business district. The benefit has been the chance to create, via a joint-venture between the Council of Adult Education [CAE] and the City of Melbourne, a library purpose-built for contemporary Melbourne — with a unique learning focus.

City Library reflects old and new Melbourne: it has stylish architecture in an historic building, in a vibrant laneway of cafés, galleries, community organisations and fashion shops.

The collection merges 30 000 core items from the former CAE library, selected over time for the needs of Melbourne adult learners, with 60 000 new items, including 8000 DVDs/CDs, selected for cultural depth and range, and the Melbourne demographic.

There are large Chinese, Vietnamese and Indonesian collections and a big Eng-

lish as a second language and literacy collection. Facilities include seminar and meeting rooms, a gallery, twenty-nine public computers and excellent provision for people with a disability.

Three libraries now run down the spine of the city: the State Library; the Athenaeum subscription library, Victoria's first library; and City Library. Each has a separate customer base and we will be refining our knowledge of this as we cross-refer.

City Library was opened by the Lord Mayor, John So and the State Minister for Victorian Communities, John Thwaites, with Barbara Horn, chief executive officer of Yarra-Melbourne Regional Library Corporation (which runs the library and was instrumental in its establishment), and Paul Salmon, the prominent (about 205 centimetres prominent!) footballer and writer.

Paul is also one of thirty Melbourne identities — including a jazz musician, restaurateur, travel publisher, pop star (Delta Goodrem), social commentator (Germaine Greer) and crime writer (Shane Maloney) — who recommended their 'Collections of desire' for the library. This had several purposes: to help develop a collection of quality (the selectors were generally people with a strong reputation in their field); to help give the collection a 'Melbourne' flavour; to demonstrate the breadth of interests we could meet; and to make it all highly visible. You can see the lists via the website <http://www.citylibrary.org.au>.

Launch activities included City Library tram tickets and branded coffee cups in cafés around Melbourne, and a conga line of young people in City Library T-shirts with sandwich boards and bongos publicising the library on streets



Minister for Victorian Communities, John Thwaites (left), and Melbourne's Lord Mayor, John So open the City Library.

and trams — one group of middle-aged ladies joined them, dancing into the library!

The enthusiastic City Library staff were the heroes of the opening. The event was extremely exciting, and staff felt that it was a privilege to be part of such an innovative venture.

Staff had a three-week induction program which was led by Yarra-Melbourne's Anne-Marie Otley and provided a strong base, and confidence. Staff are receiving praise for their enthusiasm and their well-informed, friendly, customer service.

In week two, staff hosted a celebratory party for hundreds of true believers — suppliers, designers, builders, library staff and others — who had contributed to the library development.

The separately-leased street-front café at the front of the library has become the café of the moment in the city — leading lots of people to the library's door.

Membership and usage patterns are yet to emerge — so far there has been an inundation of DVD and CD borrowers (often young), with residents tending to spend more time and browse further into the book collections.

City Library is at 253 Flinders Lane, Melbourne. ■



The on-the-street publicity team conga down the City Library staircase

let us point you in the right direction

When you need to...

- know the latest local and international titles
- locate obscure titles for your customers
- execute complex searches for collection management
- compile and email lists of titles
- verify publishers and suppliers

...then you need BookFind-Online.

Register for a **free** trial now.

www.nielsenbookdata.com.au - 1800 683 522




Nielsen
BookData

For information about online or cd-rom products visit our website or call toll-free 1800 683 522

 a vnu business