

We're with the band

University libraries in the community

Angela Bieniek

CSU Division of Library
Services, Newsletter
Editorial Team

With a particular mission to enhance its communities, Charles Sturt University had pleasing feedback from the report of the Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA). The report commented that CSU is "regarded very positively as being a proactive leader of development where it sees a community need, while at the same time being willing to listen and respond to initiatives that community representatives might propose". The Division of Library Services community connections are integral to the realisation of CSU's mission and goals, contributing in a variety of ways to the social, intellectual and cultural well-being of regional Australia.

Any member of the community is welcome to visit the CSU library, and many do: given the current dynamics of communities – demographic change, electronic technology, and diversity, to name a few – university libraries are extraordinarily suited to be the most exciting and innovative institutions in town. In addition to interested visitors, several categories of community borrowers take advantage of the library's expertise, collections and services: reciprocal borrowers from other tertiary institutions, local high school students and staff, employees of institutes associated with CSU, designated staff of the CSU Students' Association, visiting and honorary academics, and members of the CSU Council. These categories receive the services free of charge. Other community members can become community borrowers, a diverse group that frequents the CSU libraries. (There are currently 234 of them.) They pay an annual fee of \$110, which allows borrowing of 20 items from the entire collection (excluding Reserve), renewal, holds, and intercampus loans.

When Margaret and Bill Linton moved to Bathurst from a farming property in the Central West of NSW in 1985, Margaret began an Arts/Classics degree at UNE, enrolled as a reciprocal borrower at CSU, and found the library an invaluable resource. She later became a community borrower, just as the University of the Third Age (U3A) started up in Bathurst: as a tutor of their literature classes she has made great use of the CSU library, borrowing books ranging from early English to contemporary works, as well as videos to illustrate lectures; the BBC Shakespeare series has made a useful and interesting comparison with more recent versions. The local Recorder Group appreciates the availability of multiple copies of music scores, CDs and discs.

After a member of Margaret's U3A class moved to a retirement village 10 years ago, Margaret was asked to form a reading group there, as some of the members have poor sight but fond memories of books and

poems enjoyed earlier in life. For an ANZAC day reading, John Masefield's *Gallipoli*, now out of print but available from the CSU library, gave much pleasure to a few old soldiers.

Margaret also uses the library's resources in her role as a volunteer guide at the Bathurst Art Gallery; journals, art books, videos, and even old slides add to her knowledge, feeding into the cultural richness of the region.

For her own enjoyment, Margaret borrows an international range of current novels, biographies, literary criticism, especially of her favourite nineteenth century novelists, and videos. Bill greatly appreciates the works in various media relevant to his interests: astronomy, geology and photography, and he keeps up to date via periodicals. The Lintons can also often be found in the Reference collection and photocopier area.

Margaret and Bill find the library a comfortable and pleasant place to study, easy to navigate, and staffed by cheerful, helpful, and knowledgeable staff; for the staff, the Lintons' visits to the library are a valuable reminder that we are dynamic partners in the regional community.

Another enthusiastic group of community borrowers is the Home Schoolers; parents and kids happily browse, talk to staff, and leave with armfuls of teaching resources in all formats. A number of local school teachers also gladly pay the annual fee to enhance their own resources.

Thanks to the foresight and expertise of Margaret Macpherson, a former Executive-Director, Bathurst Campus library houses a large and valuable collection of sheet music and full sets of scores. CSU has had a long and close association with the regional branches of the Conservatorium of Music; music teachers and band and orchestra directors utilise a full range of music resources as non-fee-paying community borrowers. Matthias Rogala-Koczorowski, a French horn teacher and local band director, enjoys our flexible lending policy for multiple scores; Jutta Ossig-Bonanno borrows lots of fun musical instruments for her pre-school lessons.

Regional senior high school students are increasingly able to supplement the resources of their own libraries as their schools enter agreements with CSU Libraries for free borrowing. When Kelso High School tragically burnt down in 2005, Bathurst Library was able to rapidly ease some of the shortfall in school resources.

While many city university libraries are able to offer on-site database access to their extra-mural patrons, restrictions at CSU disallow that service. However, Library Services plans to move forward into database access for the community, and access to EBSCO has recently been negotiated for CSU alumni.



Margaret Linton, a regular patron of the Charles Sturt University Library