

'Read around the World' - Collection development, without a budget!

Librarians are often faced with difficult choices in collection development and the spending of their small allocation of funding. We at the Launceston City Library and Flexible Learning Centre at TAFE Tasmania are no different.

Approximately one in four of the student population at TAFE Tasmania is either an international student or from a migrant or refugee background. While Library services cater for these students learning needs, we realised in late 2004 that we had neglected to service their recreational needs. All of our fiction items were in English and as these students associate the English language with learning, such items needed to be in their own language to provide the relaxation value needed. Furthermore we saw it as valuable for them to have materials in their own language, and not feel that they are totally disassociated from their background and heritage.

While we wanted to fill this gap in our collection, we did not have a budget to do so! All fiction items in the library have been donated and are in English and we could not justify the purchase of recreational material at the cost of educational resources.

And so began...collection development without a budget...

After ascertaining the language and literacy levels of our student base, we spent the next two years seeking donations of fiction in languages other than English. Beginning with TAFE staff and students, we then wrote letters to overseas libraries, foreign embassies in Australia, Australian embassies and consulates overseas, publishers and airline lost property offices seeking donations. This resulted in receiving 160 items, some in English, some non-fiction and some fiction.

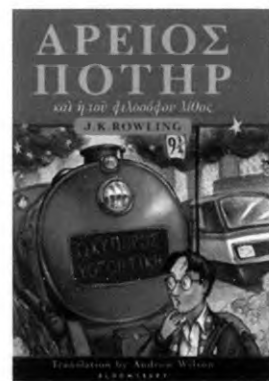
In September 2005 we applied for a Community grant from the Launceston City Council and in February 2006 received \$500 which enabled us to purchase twenty new books. In 2007 we applied for a grant of \$5000 from the Tasmanian Community Fund which we were thrilled to receive. With our grant money we purchased 105 items and were able to market and launch the project. We also commissioned artist Bruno Barcodi to design and supply purpose built shelves. He created unique shelving, inserting thousands of different grains in clear polycarbonate shelving, representing the foods of the world. At each end of the shelves there are aluminium cases representing travel and crowning the structure are over a hundred miniature books uniting a small spinning world.

Launched on 12th March this year, we now have over 600 items in our foreign language fiction collection (books and magazines) in 23 languages other than English.

We plan to 'share' our collection with the wider TAFE community in Tasmania, plus make it available for loan to other educational and public libraries. Our purpose built shelving is demountable so that we can take our books out of the library and into the community; for example on Harmony Day.

We are confident that by developing such a collection we are providing a service which will fulfil our migrant, refugee and international students' recreational needs as well as foster learning interaction. We believe that this program will also develop social interaction at TAFE by making the library a place that foreign students like to visit, thus mixing with the wider TAFE student body and fostering cultural interaction throughout TAFE as well as the general community.

Where to now? The project is ongoing and we are still seeking donations and searching for more grants.



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***Languages in collection: Japanese, Korean, Tagalog, Urdu, Hindi, French, Arabic, Chinese, Persian, Indonesian, Dutch, German, Italian, Polish, Russian, Greek, Kurdish, Spanish, Croatian, Thai, Portuguese, Vietnamese, Czechoslovakian*