

A major focus of the refurbishment will be in the general layout of the library. In keeping with John Stanley's retail concept, the library will comprise four 'living rooms' covering Parenting, Language & Travel, Health & Wellness, and Home & Garden. This will make the collection more appealing and easier for customers to locate books on their subject interest.

This is an exciting development for Darwin library services and a chance to improve not only customer services but to offer great advancements in the use of technology and keep up with growing library trends across Australia. Though using the existing building, it will be like a brand new library. We cannot wait!

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## Libraries are for everyone

Starting as a dream many years ago for the original librarians, Mary Anderson and Ann O'Brien, the new Bellingen Branch Library is now a physical entity. However, it did not come easily or quickly as numerous sites were investigated and dismissed until it was realised that the current western end of the Council building was the perfect floorspace to renovate. This site was chosen because of its close proximity to the CBD, the availability of adequate parking and the 'People place' is within the existing community and cultural precinct of Bellingen.

Opened on Saturday 16th August 2008 during the town's annual Jazz & Blues Festival, the new library well exceeds its predecessor with over 400 metres square of floor space compared to the former library space of 155 square metres. The new library includes new shelving and furniture, vibrant paint colours, a large customer service area, and space for civic functions and exhibitions. The internet access machines have doubled from five to ten and the installation of solar panels on the roof of the library combined with the use of natural lighting will result in energy efficiencies of around 30% annually. A system monitor and display inside the library will serve to educate the community about the performance of the system and solar energy.

Accessibility and layout is a major component of the design. The practical adaptation of the space creates a workable and attractive library with large open space to make it easier for staff supervision and provides greater long term flexibility. The library is more accessible for people with disabilities and those who are mobility impaired and incorporates on-site accessible toilet facilities.

Young people have also been specifically catered for in the design with separate areas for junior and young adult reading, together with space to host special activities such as story telling.

It is important to acknowledge that the new library would never have been built had it not been for the State Library of NSW providing a Library Development Grant of \$200,000 in 2006.

It is exciting to have such a welcoming space, filled with natural light and it is hoped that the new building raises the profile of libraries within the community.

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## Darwin Magistrates library reorganisation project

In 1992, the Supreme Court Library took over responsibility for the Magistrates Library and since then many improvements have been made. Until recently, these have been almost exclusively in the provision of services and staffing. In 2004-2006, there was a major review of the collection, in particular the subscriptions; the back holdings of the cancelled items were removed which meant, although it could be spaced out, the collection became unevenly arranged.

The physical layout of the library had not altered since its establishment. The inherited shelving had been purchased at several different points in time and in a couple of different widths and depths. There



*The moving process*

was nowhere within the library area for magistrates to browse or to look at items. Nor was there anywhere to properly display new material.

A major part of the first stage was the removal of the door and part of the wall of the small office at the back of the library which previously had effectively cut the library area into two separate areas and severely limited our flexibility in how we could arrange the shelving near it. A compactus was installed in what was the back room area to house some lesser used materials. A glass-topped oval table and two leather chairs were purchased for the magistrates to sit at while doing research in the library.

In the second stage we purchased new shelving and relocated some existing shelving within the area. Instead of two long double-sided banks of bays running down the library area which turned the library into three long tunnel areas, we broke these up into shorter banks running across the library. This fitted in better with the ceiling lighting and also made it easier to navigate round the library. We managed to find a journal display unit which was being discarded by another library in Darwin; this has been placed in the corridor outside the library where the material on it is eye catching for the magistrates going down to court.

By making these changes to the physical layout of the library, it enabled us to make the resources of the library more accessible to the magistrates, make the library a more attractive place to visit, maximise the use of the floor space and arrange the materials more logically. We have noticed an increase in the use of the library materials and the table has now become the centrepiece of the library—it is well used, particularly when 2-3 magistrates want to discuss something in a relaxed setting.

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