



One of the first workshops Jan organised to help bond the new workforce together was, I fondly remember, 'Personality Training'. We learned that our personality traits weren't so dissimilar to those of the people we were going to work with or were, in fact, compatible so different points of view could be worked together to form constructive outcomes. Workshops on organisational values were held first with senior staff and second with all other library staff to discuss how the library service could achieve an appropriate workplace culture and environment.

The proposed structure of the council went through a couple of changes with Jan Kilbourne originally being appointed Manager of Libraries, which was to revert back six months later to Manager Community Development and Libraries. Mackay already had a library service running four branches and Mirani and Sarina slotted into the existing organisation with remarkable ease. All Mackay librarians were conscious of Mirani and Sarina staff's worries of being 'taken over'. There was significant resistance to change from us on some levels: reservation and overdue fees, due dates, and stock collections to name a few. However, staff worked extremely well and enthusiastically through the merge to create positives from negatives at their respective branches.

Even those of us who were most vocal in our opposition to amalgamation have admitted to being very surprised and pleased with the transition. Disgruntlement with overdue fees has disappeared because of the quicker turnover of stock. A big allocation of the budget was spent on refurbishing Mirani and Sarina libraries. Music CD and DVD collections have increased to the point where we are running out of room to shelve them. We are learning to part with cherished collections so the stacks look brighter and the stock fresher. A major plus for us is no longer having to wait two months for an Interlibrary loan because we now have six branches to call on to have requested items here within days.

Employee morale was always a major concern as was increased workload for Mackay staff in extending core programs to an additional two branches. We were fortunate in that there was no doubling of positions and that gave staff a sense of security that other council departments (and possibly other larger Queensland libraries) may not have had. Sarina and Mirani libraries still function as usual: we run our own branches, and it's just the reporting structure that has changed. I think we would all agree we are still working on some issues which have arisen from the amalgamation. The big change is that staff do not see these issues as amalgamation problems anymore. Rather, we see these projects and ideas as our collective way of improving internal communication, processes, and staff development. Mackay Regional Council Library Service is developing a strong, cohesive team that is working together to develop and implement exciting services for their communities.

Troy McShannon
Sarina Library Coordinator
Mackay Regional Council
troy.mcshannon@mackay.qld.gov.au

R&R research: librarians engage with rural & remote nurses

In 2009, library staff were invited to join a funded nursing research project – and we were delighted to accept! The study addresses identified inhibitors to the engagement of nurse clinicians with research, and is funded through a Queensland Health Nursing and Midwifery Research Grant. The librarians are particularly involved in the study's intervention component, to support nurses who work in two rural/remote locations in North Queensland.

The Townsville Health Library is located in The Townsville Hospital which is the major referral hospital for North Queensland. It is the only Queensland Health library in the Townsville Health Service District (THSD), which, after a recent expansion, has

10 remote hospital facilities. The rural health facilities visited for the project are respectively located 87km and 135km from Townsville by road. Historically, and despite the provision of state-wide online services, there is an identified service gap resulting from geographical isolation, a common experience for rural practitioners.

Nurses of all levels working throughout THSD are expected to embrace research and evidence-based practice, with some nurses required to undertake a small action-based research project annually. It was observed that nurses working in THSD's smaller, rural/remote facilities have found it extremely difficult to demonstrate their involvement. Many factors have limited nurses' access to the face-to-face support and educational opportunities. The study addresses several of these inhibiting factors, while building upon other factors known to be supportive of developing a nursing research culture.

The intervention phase of the study is a multi-faceted education program about evidence-based practice and research skills, tailored to the participants' pre-existing research knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The education is delivered in the participants' local facilities with the provision of continued support throughout the year. It is anticipated that this intervention will result in improved orientation toward research measures. Additionally, the nurses will demonstrate their improved research skills by producing high-quality research proposals of relevance to their local practice situations.

The principal investigator is Anne Gardner, Professor of Nursing in the Tropical Health Research Unit (a jointly funded position linked with James Cook University). The co-investigators are the nursing research manager (Dr Wendy Smyth), the director of nursing of a rural hospital (Ms Mary Vicary,) and the director of library services (Ms Bronia Renison). A clinical nurse (Ms Tina Cann) is appointed as a research assistant to the project. Another librarian (Ms Margaret Larcombe) also accompanies the researchers on site visits to the remote facilities to meet with the participants.

The librarians provide professional advice about information services and assistance with research topics and information technologies, and also deliver tailored information literacy training. Throughout the project the librarians have been present at follow-up contact sessions conducted by videoconference to answer questions and provide help in context. Individual queries from participants are handled by telephone and email.

Involvement with this project has resulted in the development of a close collegial relationship with nursing research staff. It has provided a much needed opportunity for library staff to engage and build relationships with health practitioners at the remote facilities, and to raise the library profile within the district.

MBJC Library Visions

Library Support Services

Carpet Replacement
without moving your
books or shelves

Please view our web site &
video for more information

www.mbjc.com.au

REGIONAL AND RURAL LIBRARIES

We found that once the initial contact had been made, the participants were much more confident about approaching the library for support associated with a wide range of topics, and were keen to promote library services to colleagues. The study is nearing conclusion and we look forward to analysing the data collected.

Bronia Renison
Director Library Services
bronia_renison@health.qld.gov.au

Margaret Larcombe
Librarian
margaret_larcombe@health.qld.gov.au

Developing staff in the regions

The David Mann Library is a one of four regional campus libraries of La Trobe University, Melbourne. Situated in Wodonga, Victoria, it provides library services to the staff and students of La Trobe University, Wodonga Institute of TAFE, and research staff of the Murray Darling Freshwater Research Centre.

One of the challenges of a regional library service is attracting and developing suitably skilled staff. It can be difficult to recruit staff when many of the available positions are only part-time, opportunities for advancement are limited, and accessing regular professional development requires a considerable amount of planning and costs associated with travel and accommodation.

Despite the challenges, it is imperative that staff skills are developed for the benefit of the clients served and for the professional satisfaction of the individual staff member. At the David Mann Library, this occurs by taking advantage of the networks to which we belong.

Being part of a network of La Trobe University libraries provides access to support for external programs, such as national

conferences and CAVAL training, which we may not afford as a stand alone library. It also provides access to a sharing of collegiate expertise across the campuses. Recent advances in technology have made this sharing of knowledge even easier as rural staff can now attend seminars via video conferencing or view them at a later date on DVD. Cross-campus activities can also take the form of informal mentoring, participation on working groups, or providing the opportunity for regional staff to participate and lead major cross-campus projects. La Trobe University Library also hosts an annual Learning & Research Services Conference each year, which brings all information services staff together to meet, learn, and discuss issues related to the profession.

Professional networks, such as ALIA, CAVAL, and VATL, are also important to a regional library such as ours. They provide ready access to professional literature, updates on issues relevant to the profession, a place to seek advice, and a vehicle for connecting to other libraries in the region.

One of the advantages of working in an educational library is the richness of the surrounding learning environment. As this is a joint use library, staff can access the professional development activities offered by both institutions but also may attend public and internal lectures, seminars, and presentations. There is also the intellectual stimulus of being surrounded by others interested in ideas and learning who challenge the library staff each day to expand our knowledge base or to find solutions to problems in different ways.

Library staff also learn from each other. Because of the difficulty in travelling to access professional development, the library has developed a series of in-staff training activities each year. The members of our Staff Development Committee create a list of areas that the staff would either like to know, or would benefit from knowing, and a staff member develops and presents this training. This can range from instructions on how to use equipment

TIME IS RUNNING OUT!
REGISTER ONLINE >>> NOW!
www.vala.org.au/conf2010.htm

VALA 2010
CONNECTIONS.CONTENT.CONVERSATIONS

15th Biennial Conference and Exhibition
9-11 February 2010
Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre
Australia

For your copy of the Main Announcement and Registration Brochure contact the VALA2010 Conference Office on +61 3 9645 6311 or info@wsm.com.au

VALA - Libraries, Technology and the Future, Inc Reg No A0011933K ABN 75 344 574 577