

REGIONAL AND RURAL LIBRARIES

Going on a book hunt on the Dorrigo Plateau

Located between Coffs Harbour and Armidale, and with a population of 967, Dorrigo is a small rural township atop the escarpment of the Bellinger Valley. Dorrigo experiences both a degree of isolation and a strong, active community with many Dorrigo Plateau residents living on farms. The library experiences an average of 90 library visits per day, and is staffed by 1.5 library professionals. Due to this, no one expected the overwhelming response to Book Week celebrations at Dorrigo Branch Library, Clarence Regional Library.

On Wednesday 26th September 2009 seventy-five Mount Saint John's Primary School students in three separate groups participated in a range of Book Week activities. Aided by our wonderful relief library assistant, Helen (who also happens to be a trained teacher), the first group (years 4, 5 and 6) participated in a Book Safari Challenge. The students were provided with a map of the library and a number of questions to answer. The questions required them to use the Clarence Regional Library website, computer skills, and library searches. Challenges included answering questions like 'Who wrote these series...?' and 'What is the Clarence Regional library homepage URL?'; a Dewey Decimal Number search; and instructions to label each area found in the library on individual maps.

Group 2 (kindergarten and year 1) had a safari bookmark hunt, as did group 3 (years 2 and 3) in the afternoon. Group 3 also had a challenge to list library collection signs, e.g. junior fiction, large print, etc. "Going on a bear hunt" was a familiar read for the young ones who happily joined in. Groups 2 and 3 were allowed time to choose a book and to read. It was a delight to see the children's enthusiasm to choose a book and to have a short time reading to themselves in the library.



Prizes were awarded to all winners of the challenges and everyone received a take home pack which included a puzzles, colouring, toys, and a bookmark highlighting library services.

This event may seem small in comparison to our metropolitan counterparts, but for Dorrigo Library, the staff, and the students, the Book Week celebration not only opened doors to the library for the students, it provided staff with an opportunity to feel proud of the quality of service they offer within the constraints of limited resources.

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