

The variety and diversity of our staff provides amazing potential, but it is not always easy to encourage staff to think and work creatively in their day-to-day work. We use games as the basis of our staff development. First 'BINGO' to encourage staff to be involved in thinking about the services, programs, and resources we offer and promoting them to our customers. This was designed around some of our key functions – Cultural Awareness, Marketing, Team Work, Training, Technology, Personal Development, Fun, Sustainability, Readers' Advisory, Innovation, OH&S, and Motivation. For each heading there was a task for staff to do which encouraged them to reflect on their own work practice. We are currently working through 'Hopscotch' – an interactive process that builds staff readers' advisory skills.

CONCLUSIONS

While we have taken measures to try to ensure that we recruit and retain staff that will have opportunities to develop their potential, these measures are not enough to ensure that we have a well trained workforce that will meet the growing needs of our community into the future. Individual organisations need to strive to be 'employers of choice' so that prospective recruits are attracted to our industry. We also need to recruit and keep staff that have a genuine interest in people and events, flexibility, innovation, initiative, are IT savvy, and have a desire to learn and encourage that ability in others. We need to do effective, long-term planning to ensure the ongoing viability of the profession. More flexible work practices may be one possibility. Salary levels need to be reviewed so that skilled people are retained in the Library Sector rather than moving into more lucrative positions in other sectors. If we don't act we may face a situation where we simply cannot staff our library services in the future. Libraries are an essential part of providing an increasingly diverse population with equitable, accessible information and learning resources as well as

a welcoming place to use regularly throughout their lives. Libraries are too important for us to risk their future by lack of planning and foresight.

Carolyn Bourke

Outreach & Marketing Librarian
Fairfield City Library Service
cbourke@fairfieldcity.nsw.gov.au

REFERENCES

Fairfield City Council (2007) *Our People Our Future: a human resources strategic plan 2007 -2011*. Fairfield, NSW: Fairfield City Council.

McCarthy, J. (2005) "Planning a future workforce: an Australian perspective." *New Review of Academic Librarianship*, Vol. 11, Issue 1, April 2005 pp 41-56.

Whitnell, V. (Ed) (2005) *Staff planning in a time of demographic change*. Lanham, Maryland: Scarecrow Press.

Food for fines

In the lead up to Christmas, Hobsons Bay Libraries ran a four-week Food for Fines campaign. After hearing of the success of the program at Geelong Regional Libraries in 2008, we were keen to try it for ourselves and what a wonderful experience it was!

Food for Fines is a variation on the traditional fines amnesty and gives customers the opportunity to donate items of food instead of paying for their fines. In our campaign customers could have \$10 of overdue charges waived for each item of food.

Permission was obtained for the amnesty from Council in August 2009 and the positive press coverage began immediately with articles in three local newspapers. When the campaign began in November, another two articles appeared in the local media.

The Councillors at Hobsons Bay were very supportive of the concept. In the lead up library staff were assisted by Community Development Staff in building relationships with the relevant Community Groups who could distribute the food.

We worked in partnership with local Emergency Relief Agencies. Library staff collected the food from the community and waived the fines, and then their volunteers collected the items from our branches, packaged them up as hampers, and distributed them the week before Christmas.

During the four weeks of the amnesty, just over \$5500 in overdue charges were waived and almost 1300 items of food

were received. As well as customers taking the opportunity to clear long outstanding fines we also welcomed many donations from customers and council staff just wanting to contribute to their local community at Christmas time. The hampers created reached more than 200 homes in our local community.

During and after the campaign I received lots of positive feedback from customers and great stories were shared amongst the staff. Some customers were appreciative of the opportunity to clear their fines and other customers were glad to have a convenient location to make a charitable donation.

Overwhelmingly the requests were for a follow-up in 2010...and this month approval was received to make Food for Fines an annual event!

Joanne Smith

Library Services Co-ordinator
Hobsons Bay Libraries
jsmith@hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au