

Books, bytes and lattes seem an interesting combination and it represents a regional success story for the staff of the Mount Gambier Library in South Australia. In October 2011 INCITE we reported Cathryn Harris had just been named winner of the Nokia Business Innovation Award in the Telstra Business Women's Awards – now she and her team have topped that off with the South Australian Library Achiever of the Year Award, sponsored by Ex Libris and presented on the 15th of November at the State Library of SA.

The judges said the staff at Mount Gambier Library has demonstrated libraries are about engaging the community and creating a sense of excitement and pride through innovative programming, special events and life-long learning. The vision behind the new library has successfully incorporated excellence in library spaces, programs and the use of information technology. Designed with the latest book retailing trends in mind, and with a fully integrated cafe, the space gives the look and feel of a social bookstore.

Innovative use of technology in the library extends from implementation of RFID and a self-checkout system to a learning lounge with 15 computers for both community information technology training and hire, and also includes being the first library in SA to introduce e-audio.

Collaborative ventures and partnerships have been used to maximise community benefit and participation in the library. The team has worked hard to secure ongoing



support and sponsorship from local businesses and community organisations for programs such as Books and Beyond, taking the library outside the walls to promote both literacy and the library within the community. An alternative learning program, Finding My Place, helps at-risk youth develop skills needed for both careers and life after school.

The library has created a sense of vibrancy in an important regional

city and assisted in building both community and a sense of optimism in a tough economic climate and a sense of uncertainty about the future for local industry. This is largely due to the innovative, creative and dedicated Mount Gambier Library team who strongly believe in the future of libraries as community builders and are willing to go above and beyond the normal expectations to achieve spectacular results.

SA Library Achiever of the Year Award Proudly sponsored by

Jeannine Hooper
SA State Manager, ALIA
jeannine.hooper@alia.org.au



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