

## Meaningful use of space at the heart of good library design

Dear Editor,  
We agree that a magnifying glass does need to be used when looking at library design (INCITE, November 2011), but it is not just merchandising solutions we should be looking for.

In our How to Write a Library Design Brief workshop, we recommend that before implementing or even generating ideas about what to change, librarians first start with the questions "What are we trying to achieve? What problems are we trying to fix and why?" Library 'decorating' can sometimes do more harm than good if the 'what and whys' have not been considered.

Where many ideas are often generated, the role of a good designer is to tailor a solution based on all these factors and follow the design right through to construction and implementation. Good ideas are not always good solutions.

MODERN LIBRARIES ARE A COMMUNAL MEETING PLACE AND DESIGNS NEED TO REFLECT THIS WITH

## MEANINGFUL USE OF SPACE.

These concepts go far beyond merchandising and promotional strategy. Modern libraries are a communal meeting place and designs need to reflect this with meaningful use of space. For example, designing a central skylight in Randwick Library created a buzz of people activity and became the heart of the library. Randwick Library noted an increase of 69% of visitors to the library

a year after the refurbishment. There needs to be a better understanding of the fundamental difference between

design and marketing/merchandising and that there are far greater possibilities for library design to not only react to current socio-economic and environmental changes but lead the way in anticipating and reshaping the future of not only libraries, but communities.

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