

Feeling a bit green?

According to Wikipedia (bless its heart), "many view the library as having a unique role in the green building movement due to its altruistic mission, public and pedagogical nature, and the fact that new libraries are usually high profile, community driven projects".

Perhaps this is why, whenever INCITE focuses on sustainability, we are inundated with news of really great ideas from around Australia. Some are massive redevelopments; others are smaller changes at the forefront of daily practice. All are important.

Green building – and environmental sustainability – is of course only one aspect of the broader topic of sustainability, which also incorporates economic sustainability and community sustainability. By understanding the importance of each of these things, we better understand and manage corporate social responsibility and the social return on our investment.

Research shows Australian consumers are significantly aligned to the notion of sustainability, with the vast majority of us talking the talk of what the marketers now call "lifestyles of health and sustainability" (LOHAS). The same research shows however, that only around 10% of us actually follow through consistently with our buying decisions. A lot of us try but sometimes we fail because we can't quite figure out how to make the right choice. It's through this prism that those trying to improve sustainable practice in a library or information service must focus on their objectives.

We can't all build a new library when we want one, at least not physically, but changing our thinking can be just as powerful as changing a building. And there is much to learn from the creative solutions to the challenges posed by older environments, policies and practices.

In this issue we look at the big picture and the small, from the role of the library as the glue of a community to the nuts and bolts of the products and systems we use to create healthier, happier and more sustainable environments.

People power drives award winning green library

The Grove Library in Perth generates its own power, collects its own water and recycles its waste water – because that's what the community wanted. This is a stunning building that incorporates an impressive list of environmentally sustainable design (ESD) innovations, for which has won it the 2011 Australian Institute of Architects (WA Chapter) Walter Greenham Sustainable Architecture Award.

The architects at Cox Howlett and Bailey Woodland initially designed a 'basic' green building, but when the local governments of Cottesloe, Peppermint Grove and Mosman Park, who collectively manage The Grove library, asked for community feedback, they received a loud and clear



WEST AUSTRALIAN NATIVE FLOWERS STAR IN THE FOYER INSTEAD OF A FORBIDDING CIRCULATION DESK

message that residents wanted to include as many green features as possible.

Showcase ESD technologies include an underfloor thermal maze which underpins the energy efficient air conditioning system, double glazing and the use of natural lighting and light sensor controls, rainwater harvesting for internal use, onsite treatment and reuse of all waste water in toilet cisterns and on the landscaped gardens, and solar panels and wind turbines which generate electricity for direct use onsite.

All aspects of the building are under the watchful eye of the Building Management System which