

# REACH OUT TO REAL PEOPLE

Not only can a remote location stifle the development of spaces, it can also stifle the growth of rural and regional library staff. But my first library job was near Shanghai in China, so my perspective of this profession is a global one. I don't let the distance stop me.

This year has been my busiest yet for developing global connections. Earlier this year I travelled to Hong Kong and Macau as part of a study exchange team with Rotary International. I explored numerous public, academic, health and school libraries and met amazing library people, such as teacher librarian and blogger Di Mackenzie ([librarygrits.blogspot.com.au](http://librarygrits.blogspot.com.au)). Despite the contrasts, the issues facing librarians are similar to those we face in our tiny library. There's a blog of the exchange at [gse2013district9640.org](http://gse2013district9640.org).

I have yet to convince my boss that letting me travel the world seeking ideas is within our library budget, so the internet is my greatest ally as I scour blogs, forums, listservs and social media for ideas, articles, and to connect with other librarians. I've found twitter invaluable; it is a powerful instrument for creating and sustaining international professional networks.

I also signed up to a new program: the International Librarians Network (ILN). Through this program I was linked with Anne Dickson (@KowhaiAnne) at Auckland Libraries (@Auckland\_Libs), New Zealand. We share common ground in public libraries and youth services so we found we had shared professional concerns.

It wasn't always easy; keeping up with monthly emails was my biggest challenge but establishing connections across Twitter and LinkedIn helped keep the conversation rolling. My connection with one person has quickly grown as I've found heaps of other awesome people to connect with.

A chance trip to Auckland took my ILN experience to an entirely different level. I met Anne in real life and got a behind the scenes look at the city's libraries and librarians. There are not enough pages in INCITE to contain all the things I gleaned from my visit: zombies, reader's advisory, starter cards, youth libraries and burlesque are just the start.

Highlights included meeting Auckland Libraries' social media guru, the inimitable Tosca Waerea (@catatonichic), visiting holiday programs at Tupu Youth Library (@TupuYouth), exploring Laura Caygill's (@laurainthelibes) new branch (including chandeliers) in Parnell and meeting the cast of Wicked at Avondale Library.



Renee Mason:  
It doesn't matter  
where you are.

For me, the most exciting element of the program was discovering that we had 'real life' connections. With so much networking now happening via the web, the ILN program is a powerful opportunity to 'verify' our online presence and cultivate deeper professional connections.

Our networks help us identify our place in the world of libraries. For those of us who work in environments where it can sometimes feel like we are isolated from the world they can often be the only source of validation.

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### CALL FOR PAPERS

## *Libraries for the People*

**11th Forum on Australian Library History marking  
the 75th anniversary of the NSW Library Act, 1939**

18–19 November 2014, Sydney



The State Library of NSW is calling for papers for *Libraries for the People*. Contributions from public library staff and managers (past and present) and students are welcome.

**Full papers:** Please send abstracts (up to 200 words) of proposed papers by 14 February 2014 to co-conveners:

Dr David J Jones: [librarydoctor@gmail.com](mailto:librarydoctor@gmail.com)

Anne Doherty: [anne.doherty@sl.nsw.gov.au](mailto:anne.doherty@sl.nsw.gov.au)

**Snapshots:** Ideas for short contributions, around the theme 'a picture is worth 1000 words', are required by 14 February 2014. Contributors will present a single image and have 5–10 minutes to speak.

Invitations to present will be issued by mid-March 2014. For further information see: [www.sl.nsw.gov.au/services/public\\_libraries/professional\\_development\\_events/library\\_history\\_forum.xml](http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/services/public_libraries/professional_development_events/library_history_forum.xml)

Image: Ku-ring-gai Municipal Council Mobile  
Branch Library c. 1949 P&D-4112-12/2013



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