

NSW LIBRARY ACT TURNS 75

The 75th anniversary of the NSW Library Act in November 2014 provided a fantastic occasion for the NSW public library network to celebrate its strength, achievements and history, and to reflect on its future. It was a great opportunity for public libraries to promote themselves in a context of state-wide celebrations coordinated by the State Library of New South Wales.

The passage of the *NSW Library Act* in 1939 set in motion the now universal provision of free public libraries in NSW, as the Act provided for State Government subsidies to local councils to set up free public library services. Seventy-five years later, public libraries are going strong, with over 360 libraries across NSW, 46 million loans per annum and 35 million visits to libraries each year.

Marketing for the anniversary celebrations was coordinated to maximise the benefits of working collectively, with plenty of openings for local library creativity.

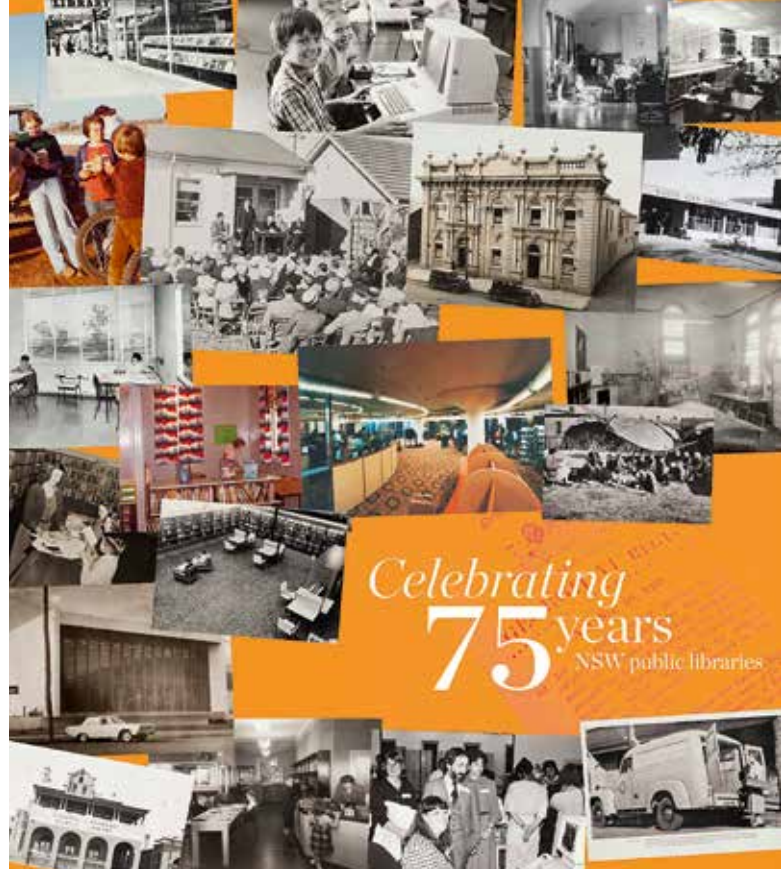
We wrote a marketing strategy and developed a 'Celebrating 75 Years' branding that could be used on all communications, across all media platforms.

A presence for the 75th anniversary was established online on the State Library of New South Wales website, and on social media via the State Library Twitter account @statelibrarynsw (using #libraryact75th), a Libraryact75th Tumblr blog (libraryact75th.tumblr.com) and a Celebrating 75 Years Pinterest Board (www.pinterest.com/slswpls/celebrating-75-years). We used social media as shared space for libraries to create content and to share their own histories through stories and photos.

A Celebrating 75 Years toolkit for libraries was developed, containing a history of the *NSW Library Act*, suggested activities to celebrate the anniversary, social media activities, poster templates and media release templates. We encouraged libraries to celebrate the anniversary date on 3 November 2014 with a cake and to share photos on social media using our hashtag.

We led a #libraryaday campaign on Twitter, featuring each NSW public library service on the State Library Twitter account throughout the month of October, in the lead up to 3 November 2014. The campaign was integrated across other social media platforms, using our Tumblr blog and the State Library Facebook page.

There was a great response from public libraries to #libraryaday, with libraries tweeting about the campaign, their own library services and other library services. The campaign was mentioned in *ALIA Weekly* on 1 October 2014.



Branding developed for the 75th anniversary of the Library Act program.

On 3 November, public libraries across NSW celebrated with a range of events, featuring cakes, mayors, zumba lessons and heartfelt declarations of library love from local communities. Libraries shared photos of their events on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Tumblr and Pinterest.

As well as the beautifully decorated cakes, it was great to see libraries carrying out activities suggested in the toolkit, using the branding in their marketing materials, displays and websites, and featuring in local newspapers and radio.

Some insights we gained from the 75th anniversary marketing campaign included the importance of establishing a unique hashtag and including this in all communications. Creating social media content can be time-consuming and we found making use of a scheduling tool such as Tweetdeck helpful to manage that process. We also found providing a framework, such as the toolkit, was important but it's equally important to do this in a way that allows for creativity and other great ideas to emerge as projects progress.

To find out more you can search on the hashtags #libraryact75th or #libraryaday, or visit the Libraryact75th blog libraryact75th.tumblr.com.

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