



# LIBRARIANS' CHOICE HOSTS 'CONVENTION FOR BOOK NERDS'

One of the highlights at the Asia-Pacific Library and Information Conference last year was seeing a strong presence from Australian publishers. Delegates enjoyed author panels and book signings, and publishers had the opportunity to meet library staff and to understand how much our industries have in common.

Building on this connectivity, Librarians' Choice hosted a publisher showcase for all NSW public library staff, held at City of Sydney's new Green Square Library. Representatives from Allen & Unwin, Hachette, Harlequin, HarperCollins, Pan Macmillan, Penguin Random House and Simon & Schuster attended and shared insights into the books that library members will be reading in 2019. They shared copies of some of the hottest titles so that attendees could read them before they hit the shelves.

As Louise Sherwin-Stark, CEO of Hachette Australia, said in her welcoming remarks, the seminar was a chance to concentrate on the main things libraries and publishers have in common: books, reading, authors and Australian stories, likening the day to a convention for book nerds.

Just like libraries, publishers are aware of the health, literacy and socioeconomic benefits of reading for pleasure. Partnerships such as the Australian Reading Hour are an ideal opportunity for us to work together to encourage more Australians to read.

The audience's favourite session of the day was a panel of publicists discussing what they are looking for when partnering with libraries for book related events. The talk was a revealing 'behind the scenes' look at the work that goes into hosting a successful author event from publisher, author and library perspectives.

The showcase also featured an insightful presentation from Nielsen Bookscan about Australian book sales data, which they showed can be an incredibly useful collection

development tool. Far more than a list of bestsellers, their data shows that trade non-fiction holds 38% of all value sales, followed by children's books at 27%, and adult fiction at 27%.

Overall, there is a strong growth in book sales on topics concerned with themes of personal development such as health, personal finance and self-help. Looking at the bestselling titles for 2018, they showed us that five of the top 10 fiction titles come from Australian authors, seven of the top 10 children's titles are also home grown, and of course the biggest selling non-fiction title continues to be Scott Pape's *The Barefoot Investor*.

Matt Pascoe from Ipswich Libraries discussed its 'Marketplace' initiative a curated collection of staff picks, new titles and the latest bestsellers. This area of the library has a loan rate of 70% at any given time and the average title circulates at over 400% the usual rate for the rest of the library and continues to grow in popularity.

More than ever before, Australian publishers are recognizing the value of working closely with libraries and are looking for opportunities to engage with us and our communities. Australian readers have a demonstrated appetite for Australian stories, and libraries can play a key role in highlighting the best books we have to offer.

As a result of the event, and discussions with the book industry, Librarians' Choice is committed that our top 10 new release list will only feature Australian titles from now on. We encourage all Australian libraries to use our free resources to showcase these stories to their communities. 🌱

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