

# Explorers welcomed

Kathy Stapleton, Monaro Regional Library and Information Service

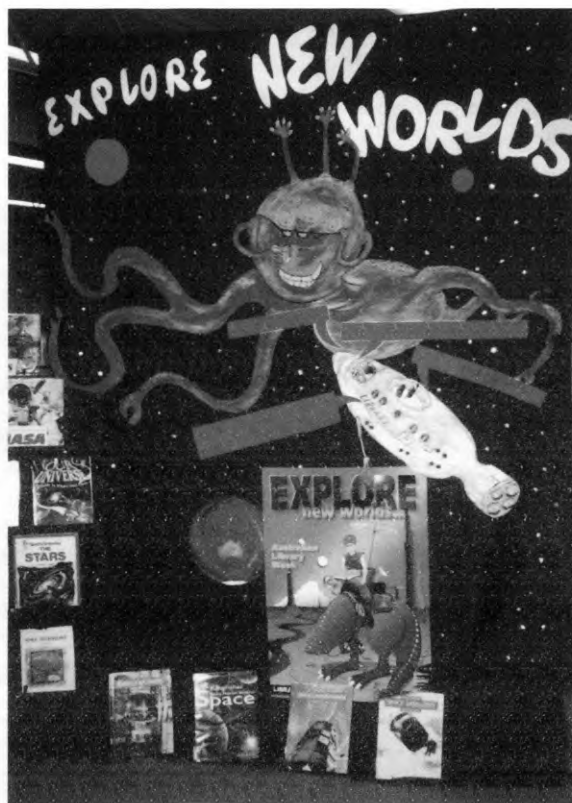
The Monaro Regional Library and Information Service holds a special event or activity each year to celebrate Australian Library Week. This year the Cooma Library invited library explorers to discover the library.

Library patrons, business people, shire councillors, school principals, doctors and council staff were invited to become 'library explorers'. Also represented were the police force, the fire brigade, and the cub scouts. A garb-ologist also explored the library during the week. Librarians from TAFE, the Snowy Mountain Hydro-Electricity Authority, and local schools were also involved.

Under the watchful eye of library staff, explorers became instant whizzes at handling issues and returns and helping patrons. Some enjoyed the work so much they even experimented with data entry for new borrowers and searching for items.

The 'library explorer' program was well-received by both the explorers themselves and library patrons. Patrons enjoyed the novelty of being served by different people and the fun atmosphere that was created. Explorers saw a different side to library services and found it was nothing like 'just reading books'. The editor of the local paper was an example of one person who thoroughly enjoyed herself. After her personalised tour of the workroom she was more aware of the breadth of tasks associated with running a library.

To complement the explorer program the Cooma Library mounted eye-catching displays using the 'Explore and discover' theme. A huge explorers roster was drawn up and displayed behind the circulation desk. One brave library staff member dressed as the explorer Stanley during the week — complete with pith hel-



One of the eye-catching displays mounted at the Cooma Library

met, beard and boots. Her disguise created an amusing range of responses from patrons, ranging from 'Is she alright?' to 'You look wonderful, dear'.

In keeping with the library week theme the Monaro Regional Library and Information Service has also devised an explorers quiz. People of all ages were invited to enter this light-hearted quiz about explorers. The correct answer for each question was given along with three other possible answers. The first correct entry drawn won a \$25 gift voucher generously donated by Monaro Books and Music.

Australian Library Week was an ideal opportunity for the Monaro Regional Library and Information Service to highlight its services. Local media coverage included newspaper articles, radio interviews and radio news items. The explorer program was a good reason to involve people in the library — especially those like the mayor, whose visit to the library was a first. ■



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