

Alice Springs Public Library wins 'Library stars' award

Susan Magnay

Alice Springs Public Library won the delegates' choice award at the 'Library stars: best of the best' forum in Perth on 19 September, for its indigenous local knowledge program, Akaltje Antheme. This unique collection of library resources ensures that books, newspapers, audio-visual materials and other items for, by and about the local Aboriginal community are conserved and available for all visitors to the library.

The 'Library stars' forum was held in conjunction with the CLICK06 ALIA Biennial Conference. The forum showcased outstanding and innovative programs in the public library sector. From 39 high quality nominations from all states and territories, seven were selected for the 'Library stars' forum. In addition to the program from Alice Springs Public Library, the other presentations were:

- Burnside (SA) Library Service's 'Book in the Sky' project, using digital technology to provide books and

other materials to people with sight impairment

- Northern Territory Library Service's training and support program for community library officers in remote NT communities
- Hume (Vic) City Council's bilingual storytimes in the community
- Moreland (Vic) City Libraries' Read More program: a celebration of reading and Moreland's identity
- South Australia's state-wide reading programs: 'The Big Book Club' for adults and 'The Little Book Club' early literacy program for children 0-5 years
- Co-operative early childhood reading and literacy programs being led by the Cities of Salisbury and Playford Libraries (SA).

In his keynote address, Rolf Hapel from Aarhus Public Libraries in Denmark, presented a vision of public libraries as inspiring physical and virtual spaces for learning, searching and reading and gave many examples of innovative projects and programs from Aarhus and other Danish public libraries. Aarhus Public Libraries have an international reputation for achievement and innovation.



Rolf Hapel congratulates Denise Senior from Alice Springs Public Library on winning the delegates' choice award



'Library stars' organisers and presenters all had an inspiring day

This was recognised in 2004 when the library service was awarded the prestigious Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation 'Access to Learning' award (see article below).

Many of the delegates to 'Library stars' were inspired and took away great ideas for programs that could be adapted to their own library services. There was a strong call for more events offering the opportunity to share and celebrate the achievements of public libraries.

For more information about the forum see <http://alia.org.au/governance/committees/public.libraries/stars.html>. The forum presentations will soon be available on the ALIA website (<http://alia.org.au>). ALIA's Public Libraries Reference Group is already planning further 'Library stars' events. *

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Access to Learning Award

If your library (or similar organisation) provides no-cost public access to information using computers and the internet, the Gates Foundation would like to hear your story.

Application are now open for the 2007 Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Access to Learning Award. This award recognises excellence in providing access to information through computers, at no cost to the user. The recipient will receive an award of up to US \$1 million. This is an award for work accomplished or in progress, it is *not* a grant application.

The deadline for the 2007 award is 31 December 2006. The award is administered by the International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP). More

details about the Access to Learning Award are available at <http://www.inasp.info/ldp/awards/>.



How is 'no-cost public access' defined?

A library or similar organisation offers no-cost public access if it allows all members of the public, from children to senior citizens, to use its facilities free of charge

(without membership or internet fees). Organisations should show how they make information technology available to the public without charge and what kinds of technology training they offer to the public and staff. Preference will be given to organisations that reach out to socially excluded groups, such as poor or disabled patrons, or those from minority communities.

2006 Award Recipient

Rural Education and Development (READ), Nepal uses an innovative approach to build and sustain village libraries. To date, the organisation has built 39 libraries, some in very remote, mountainous villages. To promote a sense of ownership, villagers manage the libraries themselves, with training and oversight from READ. *