

Free Municipal Libraries in South Australia celebrate 50 years

Elizabeth Public Library, the first free municipal library in South Australia marked its 50th anniversary on 11th December 2007.

Establishment of the Library took a mere six weeks from the time the proposal was put to Council by the State Library, to the day of opening in 1957. Community enthusiasm for the library exceeded expectations. Sir Thomas Playford officially opened the Library and 480 members signed up on the first day with 952 books lent. Community response was so great that extra staff and books were rushed out from the State Library in Adelaide.

By the fourth day 1,120 people had joined the library and by the end of the month 1,524 had become members.

The library service has undergone a number of moves and transformations over the last 50 years, including the amalgamation of two local government areas. In 2004 the City of Playford Library Service relocated into two new purpose built sites, one at the Elizabeth Civic Centre, the other a youth focused shop front library in Munno Para Shopping City. Library membership now stands at 50,688 out of a population of 73,000.



Celebrating the past – your Library welcoming the future

It has been a year for significant Library milestones. Not only was ALIA celebrating 70 years, staff at the Queensland Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries (DPI&F) Library marked 85 years of Library services within the Department with a recent party in Brisbane on the 28th November, 2007.

While sourcing data for the Library's inaugural 'Year in Review' report, research librarian Pat Abbott, unearthed information on the very first librarian to work in the Department, Comte Gontran de Tournouer.

Under the guidance of Acting Manager Judith Turnbull, the Library team set out to honour the occasion, taking advantage of the opportunity to promote the Library. Together, the team developed strategies aimed at promoting the history, achievements and future outlook of the Library, while broadening their experience in library promotion along the way.

Approaches included a unifying slogan for the event and on-going marketing material, a new eLibrary banner for the website and intranet site, a promotional postcard depicting the first Librarian, Comte Gontran de Tournouer alongside a picture of the new EcoSciences Precinct due for completion in 2010 with library services, contact information and a brief biography of the Comte printed on the back.

Some other initiatives adopted were a library timeline depicting the achievements from 1922 to the present, a slideshow to be projected throughout the event, providing a native tree as a

Celebrations for the anniversary kicked off with a formal cocktail party in the Great Hall of the Playford Civic Centre on the 15th November, 2007. Representatives of the Libraries Board and PLS were in attendance with special guest Mr Warwick Dunstan, the very first City Librarian. Other library staff, past and present joined the celebrations, along with Council staff, the Mayor, community members, Library managers from across South Australia and others who have supported and nurtured public libraries in the state.

A community birthday party was held on Saturday 17th November with long term library members joining in the celebration which culminated in the cutting of a birthday cake by Warwick Dunstan.

The anniversary has provided a valuable opportunity for current library staff to reflect upon the past as we head for towards the future, becoming aware that we 'stand on the shoulders of giants'. It was particularly inspiring to learn of the innovation and vision of Warwick Dunstan in driving the development of the Elizabeth library service and state wide initiatives such as centralised indexing of periodicals.

The City of Playford Public Library Service continues the commitment of providing a dynamic, responsive and inclusive library service for all members of our community and we eagerly move into the next 50 years with great expectations and verve.

Penny Davies
Specialist Services Coordinator
City of Playford Library Service, SA.

gift for attendees as well as a historical display of Library artifacts.

VIPs, former Library staff and managers, colleagues, clients and dedicated champions of the library service attended the event which was heralded as a great success. Amongst the guests was the Queensland Minister of Primary Industries and Fisheries, the Honorable Tim Mulherin, who cut the cake and delivered an enthusiastic speech on the value of the DPI&F Library service. The Minister acknowledged the foresight and vision of the department's former Under Secretary Mr Ernest G. Scriven (1904 -1924) in setting up the library and employing Comte Gontran de Tournouer in 1922 as the first librarian.

The staff of the Library is to be congratulated for their combined effort. It was unanimously agreed that the exercise had been one of the most effective team building activities of recent times. Staff is now reinvigorated and looking towards our next milestone, the EcoSciences Precinct in 2010.

Danielle Hoffmann,
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Queensland Dept of Primary Industries and Fisheries
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*Minister cutting the cake.
(l-r) Judith Turnbull, Manager of
Information Services and Corporate
Collections; Minister Tim Mulherin;
Heather Drummond, Manager of
Research and Information Services*