

PUBLIC LIBRARIES TO IMPROVE ACCESS FOR PEOPLE WITH PRINT DISABILITIES

Up to 50 public libraries around the country will benefit from a new \$1m initiative to provide playback devices to improve library access for people with print disabilities, following the signing of an agreement between the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) and ALIA in January.

ALIA has been selected to deliver the *Increasing Accessibility Library Initiative* (Library Initiative) on the Department's behalf. The funding includes resources for the purchase and distribution of the devices, staff training and program evaluation.

The playback devices will open up the world of digital resources to people with a print disability who currently cannot access these materials, including improved access to libraries of organisations that support people with print disability.

The *Library Initiative* is looking to provide maximum coverage by involving around 40-50 public libraries

throughout metropolitan, regional, rural and remote Australia. Libraries selected to be part of this project will be those with strategies to use the devices to achieve greater social inclusion and participation in the community for people with a print disability.

ALIA has researched playback device options and will provide a range of device choices to participating libraries from approved suppliers.

Public libraries around the country were invited to participate in the initiative through an Expression of Interest which closed on March 4. The pilot phase is scheduled for April, to be followed by a national rollout of the Library Initiative and an evaluation phase through which participating libraries can report and provide feedback.

www.alia.org.au/Library_Initiative/

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STUDENT LOCK-IN PROGRAM WINS AWARD FOR KOGARAH LIBRARY

Kogarah Library has won the 2010 Bess Thomas Award, in recognition of their innovative program *HSC LOCK IN*, designed to provide high school students with a supportive environment and expert help to prepare for their HSC exams.

Kogarah Library is located in the southern suburbs of Sydney, an area of significant diversity in language, culture and religion. On two Friday nights during the winter holidays, the Kogarah Library *HSC LOCK IN* turned the library over exclusively to final year high school students, from closing time at 7pm until midnight.

students.

Presented biennially by the ALIA Children's and Youth Services Group, the Bess Thomas Award aims to encourage and support the development of innovative and significant public library services to young people and includes \$500 in prize money. Entries for the 2010 Bess Thomas Award will open shortly. For more information, visit www.alia.org.au/awards/merit/bess.thomas/

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Kogarah Library L - R: Linda Heald, Coordinator Collection & Cultural Services, Mylee Joseph ALIA CYS, Justin Yeomans Library Youth Services Officer, Fahime Nasser Library Assistant.

Students are invited to escape from their crowded desks at home and join the friendly, collegiate (and warm!) atmosphere of the library as they make their final preparations before the trial HSC exams. Each night is entirely free of charge and features seminars, tutors, food and security, as well as full access to the library's internet-connected PCs and HSC resources.

Each night begins with a one hour seminar focusing on skills for better exam performance. The remainder of each night is structured around small group tuition, food and drink breaks, and the option for short one-on-one tutorial sessions. Students are free to study on their own, form study groups, join tutorial sessions or simply enjoy the exclusive use of Kogarah Library's resources.

Through consultation with staff and students at local high schools, each *LOCK IN* focuses on a separate subject - one night concentrating on HSC English and the other on HSC Maths. English is a compulsory subject for all year 12 students in New South Wales and Maths is one of the most widely studied elective subjects. By focusing on these two subjects, the *LOCK IN* has the widest possible appeal to



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