

Rapunzel, Rapunzel!

Let your hair down for a great cause

Nicolette Suttor, a librarian-in-training at the National Library of Australia, has shaved her knee-length hair and raised an impressive \$9,449 (at the time of publication) for the Leukaemia Foundation. One month before her Great Shave, the Canberra Library Tribe performed a one-off pop-up version of Rapunzel to raise awareness and help with a fundraising project that has spanned a decade.

Nicolette wanted to raise money for cancer research to commemorate her cousin, who died just before his 19th birthday from leukaemia. The Leukaemia Foundation funds research and supports people with leukaemia and other blood disorders. Nicolette's philanthropic efforts will help to fund families who don't live near a treating hospital, to be accommodated near one during their treatment and recovery. Nicolette is hopeful that with more research, we can help to find a solution or improved treatments for blood cancer.

There was magic, excitement and bunnies in the air as the Rapunzel story was transformed for a library audience, with nods to book conservation, information management and business practices.

Canberra's rolling hills and glittering lake provided an ideal fairytale landscape, and the makeshift props were flanked by the castle-like National Library. The performance was not only great fun (and a chance to get away from our library desks!), but also gave a one month shave countdown to the shave event of the year.

The audience was treated to a play starring Nicolette (the library's very own long-haired maiden). The story that we all know and love was overhauled, with the city of 'Canberry' trying to recover from a strange misfortune that has killed the special Rapunzel plants which, in turn, has stopped all the inhabitants from growing hair or fur.

The only citizen exempted from this epidemic is the lovely Rapunzel, whose hair grows like a golden cocoon of sunlight. It was revealed that the villainous Town Administrator destroyed the hair-giving plants and caused the hair-stop in a bid to sell hair-growth potions for a tidy profit. He realised that Rapunzel could cure all the townsfolk, so he kidnaps her, but she's helped by a friendly band of rabbits who dig a moat around her prison (an abandoned office tower).



Nicolette Suttor enjoys her Rapunzel moment before the Great Shave.

Rapunzel rescues herself, and goes on to thwart the Town Administrator as well as helping everyone's hair to grow again. Not restricted to this triumph, she is also crowned as the leader of Canberry and uses her endlessly-growing hair to remove algae from 'Lake Bunny Dragon', making her a heroine in all aspects (and most of all, a heroine in real life with her commendable charity fundraising).

Nicolette's 1.4 metre crowning glory was shaved outside the National Library in March, a month after the play's performance, to great fanfare. Her tresses were also donated to Locks of Love, so that they can be made into a wig (or, given the volume, possibly more than one).

It took 10 years for Nicolette to grow her hair, root to tip, so the performance and shave were the culmination of a great deal of forbearance and hard work. Nicolette considered herself as the caretaker for the hair during this decade of patience – going so far as to have blow-dried it only twice in that time, and taking great pains to maintain its suitability for making wigs for others in need.

The library and Canberra community really came together in supporting this cause. Nicolette's workplace, the National Library of Australia, hosted and promoted the shave event and library colleagues tirelessly baked cakes for morning teas and donated their time and funds.

Congratulations on your thoughtful and compassionate campaign, Rapunzel Nicolette!

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