

# ROADTRIP

**E**MILY WILSON of the State Library of South Australia takes off around her state on a library-themed road trip.

The ALIA SA Group recently organised a jolly jaunt through the countryside to visit the public libraries of Strathalbyn, Goolwa and Stirling. The scenic drive was captivating, the libraries were great examples of community spaces, and our hosts, Joel and Karen, were enthusiastic, welcoming and convivial.

We left the Adelaide Plains in the early hours of a crisp autumn day and headed to stop number one, the Strathalbyn Library, via the scenic Adelaide Hills towns of Hahndorf and Mount Barker.

Strathalbyn is approximately 60 kilometres south-east of Adelaide, situated on the cusp of the Adelaide Hills and Fleurieu regions. The Strathalbyn Library opened in September 2011. It's a mix of contemporary architectural additions to the original school house that was built in 1850. Architect Peter Moeck's design has delivered to the community an eye-catching and functional space that takes into account the fundamentals of how people connect and how they engage with the environments that they inhabit.

The next stop on our jaunt was Goolwa Library. The historic port town of Goolwa lies about 100 kilometres south of Adelaide on the mouth of the Murray River, near Hindmarsh Island, Lake Alexandrina and the Coorong. The Goolwa Library is on bustling Cadell Street, and upon our mid-morning arrival the library was filled with people of all ages, browsing the collections, completing communal jigsaw puzzles, and looking through the book sale items in the foyer.

The libraries of Goolwa and Strathalbyn are part of the Alexandrina Council District, so Joel was our tour guide and host at both locations. He explained all areas of the library service including the collections, the local history areas, the children's activities, the home-service deliveries, and the benefits of the One Card Network (which enables SA library customers to now use any public library across SA with a single card). He also gave thanks to all the volunteers who assist the libraries.


Over a tasty fish-and-chip lunch in Goolwa's Soldiers Memorial Garden, the tour group discussed library spaces, innovation and careers. Then it was time to begin the drive to Coventry Library in the town of Stirling. Situated in the Adelaide Hills, Stirling can be reached from Adelaide in just 10 minutes on the South Eastern Freeway. Coventry Library was opened in December 2007 and, with over 800 visitors each day, it's been embraced as a community hub.

Light and space are key features, and the architecture links the building with the lawns outside. Flexible spaces for specific needs have been created: separate areas for children and teens, a business centre,



Emily Wilson (second from left) and fellow road-trippers at Strathalbyn.

and areas for study, group discussions and quiet reading. Karen was a wonderful host with a genuine love of her workplace, she told us about all aspects of the library service and answered all our tricky questions with ease.

The Escape to the Library tour was a great success. Be sure to join ALIA SA on their next event. 

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