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The Reading Hour was a National Year of Reading event held on Saturday 25th August, 2012. The Reading Hour was considered a focal point for the National Year of Reading and a national call to action. The aim of project was to engage people in the idea of regular reading and to promote key messages about the importance and benefits of reading with children and of developing a culture of reading in the home. More specifically, The Reading Hour encouraged the public to: share a book with their child for 10 minutes a day; restore their work-life balance by taking a break with a book at lunchtime; get together with friends to read and talk about their favourite books; and incorporate a reading hour into the school week.

As with other National Year of Reading initiatives, state/territory and public libraries were encouraged to support the promotion of The Reading Hour via their networks and to develop partnerships to implement local initiatives. At the same time, the Library Agency developed partnerships with a range of organisations to implement events at the national level. The major partners involved in The Reading Hour project at this level were Scholastic, the Walt Disney Company, the Big Issue, ABC Local Radio and Dymocks bookstores, and each of the partners chose to contribute to the campaign in different ways.

Both Scholastic and the Walt Disney Company are recognised publishers of children's books in Australia and
The Big Issue is an independent, not-for-profit organisation that develops enterprises and programs that support homeless, marginalised and disadvantaged people to make positive changes in their lives. Through initiatives like The Big Issue magazine the organisation provides opportunities for people to earn their own income while building confidence and their capacity to help themselves. A special fiction edition of The Big Issue was launched on the 25th August to celebrate The Reading Hour. This edition featured stories both from open submissions and commissioned pieces from well-known authors, and was the official publication for The Reading Hour.

To celebrate The Reading Hour, ABC Local Radio ran a competition to find a National Year of Reading champion in each state/territory. Young people between the ages of 8 and 12 years were asked to write a short story of no more than 500 words that included the trigger word ‘RADIO’ and featured radio in some way. Major prize winners from each state received: return flights and accommodation to Melbourne for the winner and a parent or guardian, including transfers and meals; $50 spending money; a day of tours to the National Sports Museum, the Wallace and Gromit exhibition at the Sciencentres Museum, and the opportunity to be a special guest as the Young Reading Champion for their state at the Melbourne Writers Festival Reading Hour event in Federation Square to help countdown to The Reading Hour at 6pm. Second prize winners received a set of books that was equivalent to their height and third prize winners received an ABC Shop gift voucher.

Entries to the competition were submitted by August 5 to ABC Local Radio in each state, more specifically: 666 ABC Canberra; 774 ABC Melbourne; 891 ABC Adelaide; 720 ABC Perth; 783 ABC Alice Springs; 702 ABC Sydney; 936 ABC Hobart. Each station selected a panel of judges for their state to create a shortlist of entries which were read and recorded for radio. In total, thousands of entries were received across Australia.

ABC Local Radio staff in Victoria considered the event to have been a success and were keen to run the competition again in 2013. They felt their participation in The Reading Hour reinforced existing partnerships with the Melbourne Writers Festival and their association with the National Year of Reading and the positive messages generated about reading facilitated access to their target market of parents and families.

Kumon Australia and New Zealand is an education provider with a large network of education centres and an equally large student base. The Kumon objective to promote regular reading and literacy as an essential life skill was a natural fit with the objectives of The Reading Hour. Kumon promoted The Reading Hour by encouraging its students and families to participate in events that were held at their local libraries and Kumon hosted Read Together groups in public libraries for their students and families from multicultural backgrounds.

With its similar focus on reading the MS Readathon project was also a good fit with The Reading Hour. MS Readathon is an annual fundraising project run by Multiple Sclerosis Australia, which seeks to engage children and adults in reading whilst also improving public awareness of
multiple sclerosis and raising money for people living with the disease. For 2012, Multiple Sclerosis Australia ran a special one day event on 24th August called 60 MinuteS for MS which invited schools to organise reading activities to celebrate The Reading Hour as well as to raise funds for multiple sclerosis research.

A website dedicated to The Reading Hour (www. thereadinghour.org.au) was developed and used to promote events, partnerships and the key messages of the project. The website incorporated downloadable messages in support of The Reading Hour from high-profile Australians including the Governor-General and from ambassadors, such as the Giggly Kids. It included videos of author ambassadors discussing the importance of reading as well as The Reading Hour video developed by Disney Junior. A downloadable widget in the form of an on-screen clock was also made available for people to countdown to The Reading Hour. The National Year of Reading wiki provided a great deal of support to libraries and other professionals who wanted to create their own events for The Reading Hour. As well as promoting the events organised by National Year of Reading organisers and the partners to The Reading Hour project, the wiki space provided suggestions and guides for developing events and collateral such as posters and logos for promotional purposes.

Other websites and webpages were also developed specifically for The Reading Hour to promote related activities, including the Scholastic Marvel Reading Superheroes website and the MS Readathon’s 60 MinuteS for MS webpage. These websites linked to social media tools such as Facebook and Twitter. Partner organisations also used their existing channels and social media platforms to promote events and activities to their customers. Scholastic promoted The Reading Hour through its network of book fairs and school book clubs.

The Reading Hour itself was promoted as being between 6pm to 7pm on 25th August, however, many state and local level celebrations occurred across the course of the day to suit the different time zones across the country. Additionally, since The Reading Hour was on a Saturday, events were held in the preceding week when organisations, especially schools, were celebrating Book Week, the annual children’s festival promoted by the Children’s Book Council of Australia. Some examples of the different projects and events are given here.

The CEO’s Reading Hour is an example of a local level project that focused on raising the profile of the National Year of Reading and of The Reading Hour in the context of the workplace. The CEO’s Reading Hour was a project that encouraged CEOs in Canberra to champion the National Year of Reading and to promote The Reading Hour event to the large numbers of staff within their organisations. Some examples of the activities that were undertaken in the lead up to The Reading Hour include: adding a book review segment to the agenda of the senior leadership team’s weekly meetings; utilising in-house newsletters to remind staff about the National Year of Reading and to encourage them to participate in The Reading Hour; encouraging staff to set up mini libraries in different workplace locations so that they could swap books and share their interest in reading. The projects organisers report that staff seemed to enjoy...
rediscovering reading and that reading for pleasure had enabled them to take time to relax. Staff had also found that sharing books had given them a reason to interact with their colleagues about something that was not related to their work.

The Reading Hour Pyjama Party held by the City of Mandurah in WA is a good example of a local level event that was organised by a public library to celebrate The Reading Hour. Almost 500 children and families dressed up and took part in a free event on 25th August at the Mandurah Performing Arts Centre. After sharing supper and looking through a range of reading related displays, a number of locally identified ‘reading champions’ read their favourite storybooks to the crowd, including local Member of Parliament David Templeman who dressed in a pair of colourful pyjamas.

In Brisbane, the State Library of Queensland (SLQ) held a reading celebration to mark The Reading Hour. This included a daytime family event which featured children’s creative activities, hourly readings and physical performances of stories within the SLQ. Satellite events were also held in local libraries around Queensland. SLQ staff decided that the family component of the event should be held during the day rather than the national early evening timeslot, given that families were more likely to engage with daytime events during the winter months. In the evening an ‘up-late’ Reading Hour event was held for adults, called The Reading Hour: Love, Lust and Loathing. This was an after-hours event with authors, readings from adult books, and wine and cheese that was designed to engage adults in the National Year of Reading celebrations. Schools throughout Queensland also held a range of Reading Hour events and activities which were promoted through a National Year of Reading partnership developed by SLQ with Education Queensland (EQ). EQ staff noted that The Reading Hour was a high profile but also easy and fun way to for schools to promote literacy messages to their students and parents.

The Library Agency, in conjunction with its major partners, organised a day of fun at the Urban Screen at The Concourse, Chatswood, Sydney, which included Marvel reading super heroes and prize giveaways. This event was beamed live to the Cultural Centre Screen in the Perth Cultural Centre.

I think it’s been really well received, you know, in just talking to different librarians and teachers, and it’s a natural tie in with things. I think it’s given a real focus to developing literacy, and I can see that it’s created a real excitement, which I think has been a very positive thing.

Representative from partner organisation to The Reading Hour.
When reflecting on their involvement in *The Reading Hour*, the partner organisations described the project as complementing their focus of promoting reading and literacy and being a good fit with many of their aims. Scholastic noted that activities associated with *The Reading Hour* and the promotion of reading may have happened regardless of the National Year of Reading, but being linked to the campaign had added a new angle and a level of enthusiasm. Additionally, Walt Disney Company staff believed that their participation in *The Reading Hour* reflected their goal of helping to educate caregivers on the importance of reading to the children in their lives.

The project also provided partners with the opportunity to form new and strengthen existing links with like-minded organisations. Disney staff noted that their involvement in *The Reading Hour* helped to strengthen existing partnerships with retailers and licensee partner organisations. Additionally, Scholastic staff reported that they had developed two new partnerships with charity organisations as a result of their involvement in the National Year of Reading. The addition of their profiles to the National Year of Reading website has also resulted in a major distribution of books to communities. They stated that these new partnerships will continue beyond the National Year of Reading and that future projects that build on the aims of *The Reading Hour* are already at the planning stage.

The Library Agency staff report that feedback about *The Reading Hour* has been supportive and that the public would be keen to attend another such event in 2013. They hope that the key messages developed and promoted as part of *The Reading Hour* will ultimately have a positive impact on the literacy skills and values of families, and increase the amount of reading enjoyed by children and families.

**Finding 3.1.6**

*The Reading Hour* provided an anchor event in the second half of 2012 and introduced the call to action ‘sharing a book for 10 minutes a day, an hour a week, is all it takes to give your child the gift of reading’.

It was a simple yet effective idea that caught the imagination of communities across Australia. Adopting a broad framework (the ‘grassroots’ approach) meant there was room for local initiatives as well as major national competitions and events. This created opportunities for high level partnerships and collaboration, based on shared goals.

Partner organisations to the national *Reading Hour* described the project as complementing their existing work in promoting reading and literacy, particularly to families and children. They reflected that *The Reading Hour* provided them with the opportunity to make both new and strengthened links with other like-minded organisations.

*The Reading Hour* projects and activities were promoted primarily using online tools, including specially created websites, social media and video clips, which gave maximum impact from a limited budget.

Feedback from many different sources indicated that *The Reading Hour* was a success and that such an initiative should be continued beyond 2012.
Campaign 3: Public Library Membership Drive

The Public Library Membership Drive was launched during ALIA’s Library and Information Week in May and ran for 12 weeks until August, 2012. The aim of the project was to inspire people to take a fresh look at their public library so that they would become motivated to engage or re-engage with it. The campaign intended to raise the profile of public libraries by promoting: a reading culture in the home; libraries as welcoming and socially inclusive places; the joy of reading; and reading as an essential and achievable life skill.

The primary target groups for this project were low income families, new migrants, lapsed readers and non-readers.

National Year of Reading organisers had hoped that the Public Library Membership Drive would also foster collaboration and stronger connections between public libraries and potential partners such as schools and bookstores. They encouraged public libraries to hold open days and special events to spotlight their presence and the services they offer. In addition, a public relations campaign was made available from the National Year of Reading wiki (http://love2read2012.wikispaces.com/Library+membership+campaign) for state, territory and public libraries to take up and use as the basis for their own ‘grassroots’ campaigns to promote membership.

The National Year of Reading webpage (www.love2read.org.au/libraries) was utilised as the public interface for the library membership campaign. In addition, the public relations campaign resources incorporated a broadcast quality animation and a television advertisement that had been specially commissioned for Australian public libraries; a National Year of Reading app for iPhone or iPad and a promotional poster; downloadable posters, new member growth charts and invitations; still images from the animation; a Wordle image; event and activity suggestions; a template media release and short article for library council newsletters; and the ALIA Little Book of Public Libraries in pdf format.

In order to ascertain how the campaign had impacted library usage and membership numbers, National Year of Reading organisers encouraged libraries to collate data from 2010
to 2012. More specifically, they asked libraries to: track the difference between new memberships, door, and loan statistics from January to June in 2010, 2011 and 2012; state which National Year of Reading activities had been implemented and which had been of benefit; and identify any factors that may have artificially increased or depressed the difference in year-on-year membership growth.

At time of publication, data was not yet available, but media coverage gave the following snippets of information:

- Tumut Library, NSW, reported a 50% increase in library patronage between February and November 2012 (Tumut and Adelong Times, 30 November 2012);
- West Gippsland Regional Library Corporate, VIC, noted an increase in membership from 35,730 in 2011 to 36,157; 30% more online renewals; 24% more attendees at Baby Rhyme Time and a 70% increase in wifi usage (Great Southern Star, 13 November 2012);
- Fraser Coast libraries, NSW, signed up 2,113 new members, while neighbouring Bundaberg libraries increased membership by 1,117 (Fraser Coast Chronicle, 3 November 2012);
- 500 new members for Harvey shire libraries, WA (Harvey-Waroona Reporter, 11 December 2012);
- Lake Macquarie libraries, NSW, increased membership by 8%, to more than 60,000 (Newcastle Star, 19 December 2012).

Finding 3.1.7

Initial indications are that the Public Library Membership Drive has had a significant impact on the profile of public libraries in their communities and that it has encouraged more residents to become registered library members; more people to participate in library events and activities; and more people to take advantage of online services.

The resources provided to libraries for the Public Library Membership Drive were designed to have a life beyond 2012.
Campaign 4: National Year of Reading in the Workplace

As its name suggests, the National Year of Reading in the Workplace campaign centred on engaging with people in the context of their work environment. The campaign was developed in response to the need to develop the literacy skills of large numbers of Australian workers as evidenced by the findings of industry surveys and reports (ABS, 2006; Australian Industry Group, 2010; Industry Skills Councils & AgriFood Skills Australia, 2011). The campaign involved the Writers-in-Residence project which was part-funded under the Workplace English Language and Literacy Program by the Australian Government, through the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR).

The aim of the project was to work with employers in each state/territory to create writer-in-residence programs where established authors would be engaged to work with employees to help them to tell their stories. The project presented the opportunity to engage with a new set of partners in the area of industry whilst also leveraging off existing National Year of Reading partnerships with writers’ centres and other organisations around Australia.

In 2011 and 2012, funding was made available to each state/territory to run a Writers-in-Residence project. The organisation managing the project was expected to contract an author to work for 10 days in the context of a workplace and for a further 10 days after the residency was complete. The writers-in-residence were expected to deliver a workshop for employees who were interested in producing their own work and to deliver a pre-agreed number of their own pieces from the writers-in-residence experience. National Year of Reading organisers envisaged that the writing workshops would cater for employees who wanted to develop their creative skills and for those who struggle with reading and writing but welcome the opportunity to tell their story with the help of an author or illustrator. It was anticipated that the writing produced from each project would be published on the National Year of Reading website.

Writers-in-Residence projects were rolled out from 2011 to 2012 in unique ways. The first writer-in-residence was Kaye Aldenhoven, a poet and short story writer, who was engaged by the Department of Natural Resources Environment the Arts and Sport in the Northern Territory (NT) in 2011 to work with Indigenous park rangers at Mary River National Park, mid-way between Darwin and the Kakadu National Park, as well as the Garig Gunak Barlu National Park on the Coburg Peninsula. A further seven writers were engaged in the remaining states/territories over the course of 2012. In Victoria, the project was coordinated by Australian Poetry and Emilie Zoe Baker was selected to work as a poet-in-residence at Museums Victoria. Similarly, the State Library of Queensland partnered with Social Money Solutions to engage poet David Stavanger with employees of various charities. In New South Wales, the NSW Central West Libraries partnered with the NSW Department of Primary Industries to employ a writer to work with the employees of large farms. The WA Writers’ Centre partnered with Read Write Now! to engage various authors to work on-on-one with adults in the workplace who were struggling with literacy. Libraries ACT employed writer Andrew Croome to work with employees from Mount Stromlo Observatory. The SA State Library partnered with the SA Writers Centre and employed writer Stephen Orr, winner of the SA Our Story nomination, to work with employees at Berri Estates and Banrock Station on the Murray River as well as with the Aboriginal elders who are the traditional owners of the land at Banrock Station. In Tasmania, the Tasmanian Writers Centre engaged playwright, Sean Monro, to work with bus drivers from Metro Tasmania. Sean’s written response to his writers-in-residence experience is given on page 32.

As each project was completed, the organisers submitted reports to the Library Agency giving feedback on the implementation and success of the project which will be collated into a formal report for DEEWR and incorporated into the report on the National Year of Reading.
Residency Metro Tasmania

Writer in Residence: Sean Monro

Some observations

Metro were very supportive. They gave me access to all levels of staff, from the workshop crew, to drivers, radio operators, police, management, archives, CEO and board meetings. They were generous with their time and seemed genuinely interested in improving communications within the organization and to have the organization itself documented thoroughly.

I found the people I spoke to honest and more than willing to share.

The drivers and workshop crew were very focussed on describing the job at hand or experiences they had had. Management were often curious about what the drivers had said- particularly if they'd complained. I told management the vast majority of the people I interviewed had positive things to say. Most of the staff are very loyal and have been there for many years. They like their jobs! Management seemed proud and a little surprised by this. Some put it down to the fact that people felt more comfortable talking to an outsider. I felt it was more than that. They liked sharing their stories! I'm sure they would have shared their stories with management if asked.

I accumulated somewhere between twenty-five and thirty thousand words worth of notes during the residency. I was surprised to see just how quickly it accumulated. There were intriguing stories or anecdotes or incidents nearly every day.

As a writer it was fascinating to listen to the different rhythms, levels of language usage and speech patterns that were employed by people performing different jobs. Some used language for humour, some to reinforce their authority, and some to inform.

I found the whole experience eye-opening in terms of what's involved in keeping a fleet running on time, the social structure of a large business/service provider and how different roles or jobs created such divergent impressions of what Metro is and what it should be.

There was a tremendous amount of oral history lurking just below the surface, stories from people who had been driving buses for decades. They had seen children grow up into adults, terrible crashes and deaths, sunsets over the river, snow on the mountain, ferried men up the same mountain to fight devastating bushfires... and systemic changes in the fleet- from trams and trolley-buses through to the modern articulated buses. Often these events were described with great detail... it felt like a tale was being handed down to be kept safe.

I was not expecting to discover such a commitment to service. Sure Metro staff were doing a job, but they also saw themselves as helping people get around, providing a valuable service to the community. It was part of why they did what they did... and in a way, who they were.

I am looking forward to sharing the creative writing workshops with the Metro staff at the end of this month!

Finding 3.1.8

The National Year of Reading in the Workplace campaign aimed to engage with people to develop their literacy skills in the context of their workplace. There was some resistance from employers approached in the first instance, who blocked the notion that their workforce might include people who struggle with literacy issues. However, the organisations that chose to participate found it brought unexpected benefits. Writers-in-Residence uncovered positive aspects of the business that had not previously come to light; they discovered that employees were motivated by factors other than pay, terms and conditions; they enabled individual staff members to express themselves and to tell their own stories.

While this initiative could not turn around the issue of illiteracy in the Australian workforce in one year, in workplaces in each state and territory, it raised awareness of people's struggle with reading and writing and gave employers a new perspective on how this might change over time, using positive creative influences.
Indigenous Programs

The National Year of Reading was used as a platform to promote as well as to support the work of a number of organisations that sponsor Indigenous literacy, particularly in regional and remote communities. This included the work of the Indigenous Literacy Foundation (ILF), IAD Press, The Smith Family and the Australian Literacy and Numeracy Foundation (ALNF). The Love2Read website featured information and web links to each organisation, and encouraged stakeholders to support their work, projects and campaigns.

Indigenous Literacy Foundation

The Indigenous Literacy Foundation (ILF) is an independent charity that endeavours to improve the literacy levels, lives and opportunities of Indigenous Australians living in remote and isolated regions. The ILF was formed by a small group of volunteers in 2005 and has grown into a foundation with support initially from the Fred Hollows Foundation and more recently with the support of the Australian book industry. In the past four years the ILF has sent over 85,000 books to more than 230 communities across Australia but predominantly in Western Australia, Northern Territory and Queensland. These books and other literacy resources are distributed to a variety of stakeholders such as school libraries, women’s crèches and youth drop-in centres as well as via partner organisations like Mission Australia, government health departments, and the Royal Flying Doctor Service. Currently, the ILF is working with four communities to support them to raise literacy levels through community driven projects.

The ILF also organises a range of projects and events to help increase awareness of Indigenous literacy issues and to raise funds for its work. One such event is the Great Book Swap which targets schools, libraries, bookshops, book clubs and businesses. Participants are encouraged to plan a day when individuals can bring a book and swap it with their friends and colleagues, while also making a gold coin donation for the ILF. Participants are also encouraged to hold their event on Indigenous Literacy Day. The ILF also supports Indigenous Literacy Day by organising a range of other events and fundraisers, and it encourages publishers and booksellers to donate a small portion of the profits made on this day to support the work of the ILF.

During the National Year of Reading, the ILF promoted its involvement with the campaign on its website and through existing social media platforms. Staff at ILF noted it was difficult to detail quantifiable outcomes from their involvement in the National Year of Reading, but they are hoping that it has resulted in raising ILF’s profile with a range of stakeholders, in particular libraries. More specifically, the ILF was hoping that its partnership with the National Year of Reading would result in increased engagement with their projects such as the Great Book Swap and Indigenous Literacy Day, but the response from libraries was unfortunately very small. However, staff was appreciative of the opportunity for cross promotion, were proud to be part of the National Year of Reading and felt that it was a very positive initiative.

IAD Press

IAD Press is a boutique publishing house that is located in Alice Springs and is the publishing arm of the Institute for Aboriginal Development. It is a not-for-profit organisation that has been operating for over 35 years, making it Australia’s oldest Indigenous publishing house and the foremost publisher of Indigenous language resources. The goal of IAD Press is to celebrate more than 50,000 years of stories from the heart of Australia by producing quality publications of cultural integrity. More than supporting literacy development, IAD Press seeks to support Aboriginal communities to reconnect people back to the ownership of their language, to translate these into a written form, and then to make them as available as possible to wide range of audiences. To this end, IAD Press utilises a highly consultative process with authors and contributors, ensuring all publications represent an authentic Indigenous perspective.

To celebrate the National Year of Reading and Indigenous Literacy Day, the IAD Press partnered with National Year of Reading and the Copyright Agency Limited to organise the first Sharing Our Stories – Anwerne-kenhe Ayeeye Festival in Alice Springs in September 2011, followed by a second festival of Indigenous reading, writing and storytelling in September 2012. The events included Indigenous storytellers sharing their culture through spoken word, art and song, as well as workshops on digital publishing that were co-presented with the Northern Territory Writers’ Centre. In addition, the IAD Press’ 2012 Jukurrpa Diary was branded as the official National Year of Reading Diary.

For Aboriginal people, literacy is not just about English words written on paper. There’s a history and tradition of literacy that has embraced a whole range of art form practices, telling and sharing stories, for centuries. So our commitment is, I suppose, bigger than the idea of encouraging literacy. It’s about connecting people to the authentic Aboriginal voice on many levels, manifest as printed books, audio recordings, songs, film, other things.

IAD Press staff
Having recently undergone a significant restructure and staff change, IAD Press staff reported that they did not have the capacity to fully involve themselves in National Year of Reading activities. One of the most significant outcomes of their involvement in the National Year of Reading was a new partnership with the Northern Territory Library (NT Library), a link made through the National Year of Reading team. The NT Library had secured funding for an Indigenous Language Support Program which involved working with the Arrernte people who are the traditional owners of Mparntwe (Alice Springs). Given the IAD Press had an established relationship with the Arrernte elders, the two organisations decided to work together to develop the project. It is anticipated that through their participation in the project, the Arrernte people will develop a new connection with libraries. The NT Library partnership has also led to a new relationship between IAD Press and the local Alice Springs public library.

When considering the impact of the National Year of Reading, one partner commented that there was great value in having Indigenous literacy organisations as National Year of Reading partners and having the opportunity to be linked together to work towards the National Year of Reading aims and objectives. They also noted that if any substantial progress is to be made towards increasing the literacy levels of Indigenous children nationally, there needs to be a major investment in literacy projects that are community driven and owned. It is the hope of these partner organisations that their connection with the National Year of Reading has raised awareness, particularly amongst libraries and other organisations, of the key issues impacting on Indigenous literacy and the link this has to the wellbeing of Indigenous people. It was also hoped that the National Year of Reading may have supported Indigenous organisations to increase the public’s exposure and access to the breadth of Aboriginal stories and voices in Australia. Whether or not the National Year of Reading has actually achieved these goals is unknown and difficult to quantify in the short or long term, but the local partnerships and projects that have resulted will have an impact on the Indigenous communities involved.

Finding 3.1.9

The National Year of Reading was used as a platform to promote the work of a number of organisations and projects supporting Indigenous literacy. This was viewed positively by the organisations involved, but it is difficult to quantify the effect this has had.

Certainly new partnerships were formed, for example the collaboration between IAD Press and the NT and local Alice Springs libraries that will result in a language development program with the Arrernte people.

It is hoped that National Year of Reading’s focus on Indigenous literacy will result in an increased awareness of the issues to do with Indigenous literacy, and the need for more support for Indigenous people to have ownership of the telling, publishing and distribution of their unique stories and voice.
Monitoring and evaluation

The Library Agency team monitored the impact of the National Year of Reading in the media over the course of the year and, even though an impact review of the data could not be completed until the year's end, they consider that the use of media had been very successful given the 'grassroots' nature of the campaign. For example, the National Year of Reading Launch in Canberra on February 14, was attended by the Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, the former Australian Government Arts Minister, Simon Crean, and the School Education Minister, Peter Garrett, and this provoked a great deal of interest from the traditional media and provided a great boost to the campaign launch. At the same time, a large number of media interviews were completed by founder partners and National Year of Reading organisers at the national level and the Library Agency estimated the total media coverage across the year to be worth approximately $26 million. This figure included regular mentions on ABC 2's First Tuesday Book Club and ABC Local Radio, and the publication of excerpts from the Our Story Victorian shortlist in The Age, but it did not include free airtime on Disney Junior (The Reading Hour spot), The Big Issue's special fiction edition coinciding with The Reading Hour, the broadcasting of a library advertisement by SBS (a grant from the SBS Foundation), Channel 7's support for Queensland's Dads Read program and Queensland cinemas airing the library animation produced as part of the Public Library Membership Drive.

Although there was less coverage by the major state and national newspapers, the campaign featured regularly in many local community papers as the National Year of Reading progressed. Most of the media coverage was generated at the grassroots level and focused on the collaborative efforts of local libraries, bookstores, community groups and participants in the National Year of Reading. The capacity for partners to leverage off the National Year of Reading in this way was considered a significant outcome by the Library Agency team and they were hopeful that partnerships initiated during the National Year of Reading would be sustained beyond 2012.

The success of the National Year of Reading activities and events implemented at the national level will be ascertained by analysing the reports received from organisations participating in the different campaigns as well as the data concerning levels of engagement. The Library Agency team collated statistical data relating to the expressions of interest received for each event, attendance at events, and entries received for competitions which will make it possible to gauge how the profile of the National Year of Reading has increased. In addition, as the public registered their events and activities on the National Year of Reading calendar, the team was able to monitor the number of events that were implemented across Australia at the local level. In November 2012, there were more than 3,700 events and activities listed on the National Year of Reading calendar and by the end of the year, the number exceeded 4,000.

Finding 3.1.10

The objectives of the National Year of Reading were based on raising awareness of the importance of reading as a life skill and a catalyst for wellbeing, which meant that media coverage was an essential part of the campaign. On a purely cash basis, it is estimated that media coverage returned more than $15 worth of value for every $1 invested in the campaign ($26 million worth of media coverage, $1.7 million funding). Through ABC TV and Radio, the campaign reached millions of viewers and listeners; through Disney Junior, The Reading Hour message reached millions of families. At a local level, there was a high volume of sustained coverage in local newspapers, on local radio and through online media.

There were insufficient funds to carry out pre- and post-campaign attitudinal studies, but the level of media coverage suggests that the key messages of the National Year of Reading, including 'a reading culture in every home' and 'share a book with a child for 10 minutes a day, an hour a week' must have achieved some level of penetration.
Legacy

The role of the Library Agency has been to implement the National Year of Reading on behalf of and in conjunction with the founder partners. To this end several key initiatives have been implemented and a range of powerful resources produced to facilitate interaction and collaboration between individuals, community groups, and organisations at the local, state and national levels. As a consequence, a great number of partnerships have been created during the National Year of Reading. Given that the Library Agency fulfilled its role at the end of 2012 and the National Year of Reading drew to a close, the decision to sustain these partnerships beyond the National Year of Reading will be wholly that of the partners involved.

While the National Year of Reading has been conceptualised and guided by the founder partners, the Library Agency team stated that there had been very few parameters placed around the partnerships and events that were associated with the campaign. The main aims of the National Year of Reading - to highlight national literacy issues and to encourage, promote and celebrate the joy of reading, provided a broad framework for the campaign and participants were encouraged to build networks, create partnerships and work collaboratively to implement activities, projects and events to fit their particular contexts. The Library Agency team have also supported their partners' efforts to promote the National Year of Reading by making a range of tools and collateral freely available to them whilst also cross-promoting their partners' business on the Love2Read website. The Library Agency team believed this kind of collaboration, particularly the free use of the National Year of Reading logo and collateral, founded a sense of trust and made it easy for people and organisations to become involved with the campaign. As a result, a great range of collaborations and partnerships were generated, and the reach of the National Year of Reading extended to quite diverse sections of the community. In addition, the Library Agency team believed the collaborative nature of the campaign fostered a non-competitive focus and a sense of inclusivity and that this gave people the freedom to be creative and ensured a diversity of programs. The Library Agency team considered the trust generated by the collaborative efforts of stakeholders to be an important aspect of the legacy of the National Year of Reading.

Many resources and a good deal of collateral were created to support the branding of the National Year of Reading. One of the most recognisable pieces of collateral was the National Year of Reading logo which was an effective drawcard for new partners. The image of the flower on the logo is seen by National Year of Reading organisers as a powerful symbol and one which has the potential to make connections between quite different reading organisations and for this reason the founder partners consider that it should continue to be used beyond 2012. Similarly, The Reading Hour advertisement created by Disney is also seen as an important piece of collateral. The founder partners are hopeful that The Reading Hour might continue as a national event, in which case the Disney advertisement could continue to be used to generate the key messages concerning reading and the development of a reading culture.

As the National Year of Reading drew to a close, the National Year of Reading founder partners and the Library Agency team were considering how the National Year of Reading brand and the logo might be utilised beyond the National Year of Reading and how some of the projects that were successfully implemented in 2012 might be sustained. Additionally, the founder partners recognised the importance of libraries maintaining the momentum they gained from the National Year of Reading and the boost that this gave their profiles.

We've been very clear... obviously we have a number of partners that work in the same field, you know, bookshops that are in the same suburbs and these sorts of things, but we've been very clear that this is very collaborative, it's not competitive and it's not exclusive. So it's literacy in all of its shapes and forms, and it's all okay. Absolutely. Anything, anywhere, anytime.

Library Agency team member

Finding 3.1.11

A strong logo was essential to unite the campaign, and making it freely available promoted the values of generosity, trust and collaboration. This extended to the wide range of tools and collateral that was developed for the National Year of Reading.

Participants were encouraged to build on the resources created centrally, and they had the opportunity to promote their own organisations and projects via the National Year of Reading website. The trust generated by the collaborative efforts of stakeholders will be an important aspect of the legacy of the National Year of Reading.

A great range of collaborations and partnerships was generated and the reach of the National Year of Reading extended to quite diverse sections of the community. Ultimately, the decision to sustain these partnerships beyond the National Year of Reading will be wholly that of the partners involved.

The collaborative nature of the campaign fostered a sense of inclusivity and encouraged a creative and diverse set of programs.

The National Year of Reading founder partners and organisers will consider how the brand and logo might be utilised and how successful projects might be sustained beyond 2012.
Profile Two: National Year of Reading in the Australian Capital Territory

Context
Libraries ACT is a business unit found within the Parks and City Services Division of the Department of Territory and Municipal Services Directorate (TAMS) of the ACT Government. It delivers public library services to the ACT community and is the only public library service in Canberra. Libraries ACT serve a population of over 350,000 people and it encompasses nine public libraries (Belconnen, Civic, Dickson, Erindale, Gungahlin, Kingston, Kippax, Tuggeranong, Woden), two mobile libraries and the ACT Heritage Library. The vision of Libraries ACT is to inspire lifelong learning and community engagement in the ACT and, more particularly, to celebrate literacy, learning, and the pleasure of reading.

The director of Libraries ACT, Vanessa Little, considers one of the central roles of the library is to respond to the literacy needs of the community it serves. Whilst Canberra is viewed as one of the most highly paid and highly educated communities in Australia, the 2006 Adult Literacy and Lifeskills Survey (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006) shows that 32% of the population in the ACT have poor or very poor literacy skills. The lack of literacy competence of blue collar workers has been identified as an issue by employers in Canberra and the emergence of social issues is becoming more evident.

The focus on functional literacy signifies a new approach to the way that Libraries ACT conducts its business. Rather than passively waiting for the public to access the library, a lot more of the work of the library is linked to the community context. To support this more active approach, Libraries ACT has restructured the roles of its professional staff and is driving its focus on areas of specialisation (early childhood literacy, adult literacy, health and wellbeing, arts and culture, government and legal, heritage and Indigenous, ICT, multicultural, schools, seniors, and youth). The library’s staff are increasingly working with the community groups and organisations associated with their area of specialisation to help determine what are the real issues for the groups and how the library can collaborate with them to address those issues.

Consequently, while Libraries ACT provides sophisticated, high level library services that meet the needs of the well educated and highly literate part of the community, it is also endeavouring to provide services that address economic and social disadvantage that support people to deal with functional literacy issues and to ‘learn their way out of poverty’. The programs and activities that were implemented to celebrate the National Year of Reading reflected this focus, with events being offered that celebrated reading as well new initiatives that focused on community development.
Organisational structures

In late 2011, Libraries ACT established a steering committee to advocate for the National Year of Reading and to facilitate collaboration between organisations on the development and delivery of programs and events. The rationale and function of the National Year of Reading ACT Steering Committee was defined by the terms of reference for local steering groups that was set out in the National Year of Reading framework.

The purpose of the National Year of Reading ACT Steering Committee was to: engage with participants, advocate and facilitate across the public and private sectors; make the best use of local connections and partnerships created in response to the National Year of Reading; and maintain the balance of emphasis on both readers and non-readers of all ages and from diverse cultural backgrounds. Additionally, the role of the National Year of Reading ACT Steering Committee was to: spread the word about the National Year of Reading; guide the planning, development and delivery of local initiatives, especially activities which targeted the significant percentage of the Australian population with low literacy levels; apply for funding for these initiatives; and support local delivery of national programs.

The National Year of Reading ACT Steering Committee comprised a network of 23 partners from both the public and private sectors, including representatives from: ACT Council of Social Services; ACT Bilingual Education Association; ACT Government Community Services Directorate – Office for Children, Youth and Family Support; ACT Government Community Services Directorate – Arts ACT; ACT Government Education and Training Directorate; ACT Writers' Centre; Australian Catholic University; Alexander Maconochie Centre; Canberra Institute of Technology; Canberra Multicultural Community Council; Children's Book Council, ACT branch; University of Canberra; Malbon House Publishing; and The Smith Family.

A second larger network called the Facilitators Group was also created to increase the reach of the National Year of Reading ACT Steering Committee. This group comprised professional organisations and individuals interested in supporting events to do with the National Year of Reading. In addition, high-profile Canberrans were recruited as ACT ambassadors to help raise the profile of the National Year of Reading and to reinforce key messages about the importance of literacy and reading.

Partnerships

The National Year of Reading gave Libraries ACT the impetus to activate and strengthen its existing partnerships by collaborating on programs and events that celebrated the National Year of Reading 2012. New partners were identified through Libraries ACT's community networks, the networks set up by the Steering Committee and the Facilitators Group, and via referrals from the other National Year of Reading founder partners. Some of the organisations working in partnership with Libraries ACT included: the Australian National University Student Equity Division, Canberra Museum and Gallery, the National Library of Australia, ACT Education and Training Directorate, the Canberra Theatre Centre, and Volunteering ACT.

Even though it has some of the most advantaged communities in Australia, Canberra also has a developing 'underclass' of citizens considered to be functionally illiterate. Libraries ACT used the National Year of Reading as an opportunity to focus attention on this issue and to adopt a more active role in tackling the literacy gap.

By collaborating on National Year of Reading events and using existing and new networks developed during the National Year of Reading, Libraries ACT activated and strengthened existing community partnerships and developed new partnerships in order to address emerging social issues.
Programs and activities implemented during the National Year of Reading

In 2012, the programs routinely offered by Libraries ACT were branded National Year of Reading. A number of these programs focused on the development of language and literacy in the early years and emphasised learning as fundamental to child development. Such programs included: Giggle & Wiggle, intended for the 0-2 age group and focused on learning early literacy concepts through language play; and Story time, an opportunity for 3-5 year olds to enjoy stories, rhymes and songs. During the National Year of Reading, there was a significant increase (approximately 40%) in the numbers of participants in the Giggle & Wiggle program. Libraries ACT also sought to engage older children in a range of literacy activities such as holiday programs, book discussion groups and the Canberra’s Own Outstanding List (COOL) Awards, catering for the interests of 5-12 year olds.

During the National Year of Reading, Libraries ACT initiated a range of projects with its community partners in addition to the programs and activities offered in-house. Some examples of these programs are given here.

The Workplace Literacy Program
While most projects were conducted during the course of 2012, the Workplace Literacy Program would not be delivered until 2013. The program comprised a long term community literacy initiative that Libraries ACT, together with a range of employers of blue collar workers, embarked on during the National Year of Reading. The purpose of the program was to address adult literacy in the context of the workplace. The program would be tailored to workplace needs and centred on the provision of an online workplace health and safety program, which served to increase participant’s knowledge of health and safety processes and procedures whilst also improving their literacy and ICT skills. Academic staff from the University of Canberra were to be contracted to develop the online learning tools for the program and laptops were to be made available to participants. In addition, the Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) was expected to run a development program for TAMS supervisors and managers to teach them how to recognise people with literacy problems and how to encourage them to access the Workplace Literacy Program. Depending on the size and the literacy needs of the workforce, it was anticipated that literacy tutors might be embedded into workplace contexts in the longer term. At time of publication, project proposals had been developed by the University of Canberra and CIT partners and a funding application had been prepared for TAMS senior executives.

Canberra Kids Love2Read
The Canberra Kids Love2Read (CKLove2Read) project is a Libraries ACT initiative that was developed to foster the love of reading in younger school-age students and to encourage the habit of visiting the library. The program targeted year one students from five public primary schools who were bussed or walked to their closest public library over the course of the year. While the schools self-selected to be involved in the CKLove2Read program, schools with students from lower socio-economic backgrounds were encouraged to join the program.

The aim of the CKLove2Read program was for each school to visit their closest library once a month in order for the students to borrow books and participate in enjoyable, educational activities that related to reading, literacy and the library. Libraries ACT presented each of the schools involved in the program with a set of books for their school library and the year one students were presented with a special reading pack containing a library bag and a book.

While the CKLove2Read program was a pilot project, it was a good example of a successful collaboration between Libraries ACT and its community partners. Many of the books that were gifted to the students and schools were donated by children’s author Tania McCartney, an ACT ambassador for the National Year of Reading, or by a group of publishers whose support Tania had gained for the project, including: Hardie Grant Egmont; Pan Macmillan; Harper Collins; Walker Books Australia; New Frontier; Wilkins Farago; Ford Street Publishing; Hachette Children’s Books; Scholastic, and the National Library of Australia. Additionally, sponsorship from FE Technologies made it possible to provide buses for schools that were not within walking distance of their public library.

Kingsford Smith School (KFS) was one of the schools that participated in the CKLove2Read program. The school is located close to the Kippax Public Library and the teacher-librarian at the school was keen for the students at KFS to become members of the library. This aim coincided well with CKLove2Read initiative which was operating at the Kippax library and the Year 1 and 2 students were able to join in with the program. While the teacher-librarian had organised the initial visit, the school’s classroom teachers were encouraged to make repeat visits and, even though only a few subsequent class visits were made, the school was happy that close to 400 year one to nine students became members of the Kippax Public Library in 2012. In addition, the parents of some of the younger students made repeat visits to the library with their children and quite a number of the school’s senior students would drop in to use the public library computers. At the time of writing this report, the CKLove2Read program was under evaluation to determine whether it would operate in 2013.
Canberra Readers' Festival
Libraries ACT caters for an increasing number of independent book clubs by loaning sets of books and in 2012 there were over 170 independent book clubs that used the service. Many of the book club members also attended author talks run by the library and Libraries ACT staff felt that such an audience would also be supportive of a readers' festival, particularly if they could attract the authors that the book clubs were reading. Consequently, the inaugural Canberra Readers' Festival was organised by Libraries ACT as a special event for the National Year of Reading. It aimed to inspire, entertain, get people excited about books and the power of reading, and provide opportunities to discuss and share views about books.

The festival was held at The Playhouse on Saturday 22nd September. Participating authors were: Kate Grenville, Anita Heiss, Melina Marchetta, Hazel Edwards, Kel Robertson, and Frank Moorhouse. Media coverage was positive in the lead up to the festival, with print and radio stories run, and several of the participating authors interviewed. The high-profile nature of the authors helped generate interest in the festival and was also demonstrated in the audience response to the quality of speakers and their mix of informative and entertaining talks. The topics chosen by each author resulted in an unplanned synergy between the sessions in the day-long program. A Twitter conversation with the hashtag #CRF2012 took place across the day, and several post-festival blog reports were posted by participants, including ACT National Year of Reading ambassador Tania McCartney. The response of festival participants was positive, and there was enthusiasm for it to become a regular event. Comments demonstrated approval of the mix and quality of speakers, the venue's intimate atmosphere, and how easy it was to hear the speakers.

Based on participation and feedback, the inaugural Canberra Readers' Festival was considered a success in engaging with passionate readers, and there was a demonstrated demand for it to become a regular event. Some aspects of the festival were identified for improvement, and there was potential to explore further partnership and/or sponsorship opportunities to make the festival more financially viable.

As the ACT winner of the National Year of Reading's Our Story competition, author Kel Robertson was invited to participate in the inaugural Canberra Readers' Festival. While his profile with readers might not have been as high as that of other speakers, his entertaining talk resulted in his book Smoke & Mirrors selling the second most copies at the
festival and Anita Heiss' autobiography *Am I Black Enough For You?* sold the most copies. As a result of his participation in the festival, Kel's *How to Write Crime Fiction* workshop, held at Civic Library on 15 November was well subscribed. Feedback from the festival's participants demonstrated their appreciation and enthusiasm for the event as well as their desire to see the festival run again in 2013.

Canberra's Longest Bookmark
The project, entitled *Canberra's Longest Bookmark*, captured the attention of the Canberra community when the Dickson Library set a challenge for the local knitting group and other Canberra knitters to knit a giant bookmark as a way to celebrate the National Year of Reading. The challenge was for the bookmark to stretch 4.07 kilometres from the Civic Library to Dickson Library. The community was asked to knit bookmarks of a specific dimension (21cm x 6cm) that would be knitted into a one long bookmark. It was anticipated that over 19,000 bookmarks were needed to cover the distance and at the end of the project the bookmarks would be sewn into blankets for homeless people in the ACT. Libraries ACT staff created a Facebook page (HelpKnitCanberrasLongestBookmark) to raise the profile of the project and to help the participants communicate with each other and to keep up to date with the bookmark count. At the start of August, the Facebook tally showed that 14,559 bookmarks had been knitted. Libraries ACT staff believed that this project had enabled the community to view libraries not only as a place to borrow books but also as a place to meet and work together. The goal was reached at the beginning of October, with more than 22,000 bookmarks received from knitters in the ACT, elsewhere in Australia and even from overseas. This 'grassroots' project drew community and media attention to the National Year of Reading brand and its objectives.

Finding 3.2.2
Libraries ACT used the National Year of Reading branding to build on its existing programs, many of which emphasised the development of early language and literacy skills and fostered the engagement of children and families with their local libraries. It also introduced new initiatives. In some instances, these resulted in an increase in Libraries ACT program attendance (*Canberra Kids Love2Read*), in others it engaged new partners and new audiences (*Workplace Literacy Program* and *Canberra's Longest Bookmark*).

Libraries ACT used the attention generated through National Year of Reading branded activities to promote the breadth of its service for readers and non-readers, including presenting libraries as community hubs and meeting places.

Libraries ACT used the National Year of Reading as a catalyst to hold a *Canberra Readers' Festival* which aimed to make people excited about books and the power of reading, and resulted in successfully engaging passionate readers who expressed an interest in attending similar future events.

For the National Year of Reading, Libraries ACT has collaborated with a diverse range of commercial, community and education partners to develop and deliver targeted programs, leveraging off the interests of existing library audiences.
Reaching the target audience

Libraries ACT drew on a suite of strategies to publicise and promote its activities to the public. The library staff worked in conjunction with the TAMS Directorate media team to access local radio, television, and newspapers. For example, Libraries ACT publicised its activities on Street Beat, a segment on local FM radio that delivers free community messages, and through a fortnightly time slot on ABC Local Radio where staff talked about library matters and events or about different aspects of the library’s collections. The library also made use of Lit Bites, a Saturday column in the Canberra Times newspaper, to promote books and reading related events and services. From time to time it also paid to advertise in the ACT Government Community Noticeboard section of the paper.

As well as the printed posters and flyers that advertised events in each branch of the library, Libraries ACT staff used electronic media to promote events to specific community groups. For example, the staff sent notifications to schools via the Directorate of Education, whole of government emails to members of the ACT public service, and more direct emails to the multicultural community or the Home Education Networks. In addition, Libraries ACT kept the community informed of its activities via the library website and had an e-newsletter which the public subscribed to. The library also used an event bookings website, which helped promote planned events, as the community could subscribe to an RSS (Rich Site Summary) feed.

The library also made use of social media to reach a broader range of people, which included utilising a Libraries ACT blog and having a presence on Facebook, Twitter, Flickr and YouTube. At the time of publication, the Libraries ACT staff was in the early stages of evaluating how effective social media had been as a tool for promoting their activities. Like many organisations they tended to draw qualitative feedback from its use and to infer coverage from the numbers of followers that they attracted.

Libraries ACT staff believed that the activities relating to the National Year of Reading, had been well promoted and there had been a lot of market penetration of the National Year of Reading brand. Initial findings from research undertaken for the 2012 Regional Libraries Syndicate Report (Nexus Research, 2012) cited 17% brand recognition for National Year of Reading in the ACT.

Libraries ACT had drawn on its existing range of strategies to highlight the National Year of Reading logo and to endorse the importance of reading message. They had also been able to call upon high-profile advocates and ambassadors to help to raise the profile of the National Year of Reading in the media. For example, the Libraries ACT’s fortnightly timeslot on ABC Local Radio was hosted by Louise Maher, who was an ACT ambassador for the National Year of Reading. During this segment, Louise successfully spotlighted national and local initiatives to do with the National Year of Reading and when she was not talking directly with Libraries ACT staff she continued to focus on topics that were related to National Year of Reading initiatives or to reading and literacy more generally.

The networking capacity of the National Year of Reading ACT Steering Committee and the Facilitators Group also proved to be a very useful way for partners to share information and to make connections with each other. The National Year of Reading coordinator regularly sent emails to the members of both networks to keep them informed of National Year of Reading events in the ACT and to pass on messages from the National Year of Reading project team. In addition, greater use was made of social media to raise the profile of National Year of Reading projects and events, including creating a Facebook page for the Canberra’s Longest Bookmark project; sending daily Twitter messages that highlighted a different book each day (hashtag #booktoread); and making connections to National Year of Reading partners on Twitter or Facebook and re-tweeting their tweets and sharing their posts.

Monitoring and evaluation

Libraries ACT used a range of strategies to monitor and evaluate the activities and events it organised. This included monitoring the number of bookings and the attendance at events, as well as gaining feedback about the success of programs from individual patrons and staff evaluations. Qualitative feedback was also collected at Steering Committee meetings. Additionally, data about National Year of Reading events in the ACT was gathered via the events registered on the national calendar on the Love2Read website and via the national and departmental media monitoring activities. A report on the National Year of Reading in the ACT is due for release early in 2013.

Library membership drive

In Canberra, more than 60% of the population belongs to the public library. While this is quite a high proportion of the population compared with other parts of Australia, Libraries ACT was keen to run two local membership campaigns during the National Year of Reading to target non-users or inactive users. The winter campaign commenced in July with the ACT Chief Minister, Katy Gallagher, agreeing to the cancellation of all library fines as a way of encouraging people back into the library. Additionally, Libraries ACT adjusted its policy regarding fines so that library members who needed to could extend their loans without being fined for not returning a book on time. A summer campaign was planned for December, 2012 to February, 2013. This campaign would promote the benefits of library membership using the tagline ‘a library card is like your golden ticket’ over the holiday period and into the new school year. It was also designed to capitalise on the National Year of Reading.
Year of Reading by carrying some of the momentum into next year. With its focus on increasing library membership among young children, and indirectly that of their parents, the CKLove2Read project complemented the library’s membership drives.

Finding 3.2.3
Libraries ACT drew on a suite of strategies to publicise and promote its National Year of Reading activities including local mainstream media, printed posters and flyers and electronic media such as emails, library website, e-newsletter and an events bookings website.

Libraries ACT increased its use of social media including blogs, Facebook, Twitter, Flickr and YouTube in order to reach a broader range of people and raise the profile of National Year of Reading projects and events. Confident usage of social media will be a lasting legacy of the campaign.

Libraries ACT called on high-profile advocates and ambassadors and drew on the networking capacity of the National Year of Reading Steering Committee and the Facilitators Group to raise the profile of the National Year of Reading, share information and help partners to make connections with each other. The relationship with these advocates, supporters and partners will also carry on beyond 2012.

Libraries ACT embarked on two local membership campaigns during the National Year of Reading to target non-users or inactive users. Figures were not available at the time of producing this report, but anecdotal evidence suggested that the initial membership drive had been a success.

Legacy
The National Year of Reading provided an opportunity for Libraries ACT to strengthen existing partnerships while developing new ones. This resulted in the cultivation of a range of partnerships with diverse community groups and organisations which had the potential to develop further, beyond the end of 2012. In addition, a review of the National Year of Reading initiatives will enable Libraries ACT to take stock of the outcomes that have been achieved and identify the critical success factors that have contributed to the establishment of successful projects and partnerships.

While the National Year of Reading provided a context for Libraries ACT to present events that celebrated reading and fostered library membership, it also provided the impetus to begin work on more difficult projects that addressed hard core literacy issues. The National Year of Reading facilitated a greater public awareness of the importance of reading and showcased the work of Libraries ACT and its partners, elevating the profile of the various entities and highlighting what they had to offer the community.

Another aim for Libraries ACT in the National Year of Reading was to establish an extended network of partners to collaborate on a broader learning initiative focusing on narrowing the gap between highly educated, highly literate members of the Canberran community and the growing number of people who lack even the basic functional literacy. Thus the work begun in 2012 to establish the National Year of Reading ACT Steering Committee and the Facilitators’ Group and to implement programs that responded to community needs will serve as a springboard to developing broader community learning initiatives that are brokered via these networks.

Finding 3.2.4
Libraries ACT will undertake a review of its National Year of Reading participation to identify the outcomes achieved and the critical success factors that contributed to the establishment of successful projects and partnerships.

The National Year of Reading provided a context for Libraries ACT to celebrate reading and foster library membership as well as to work on projects that address issues related to functional literacy.

The National Year of Reading increased public awareness of the importance of reading and increased the profile of Libraries ACT and that of its partners.

National Year of Reading provided the opportunity for Libraries ACT to strengthen and establish an extended network of partners with whom it will continue to collaborate on programs that respond to community needs and to develop broader community learning initiatives past 2012.
National Year of Reading community programs in the ACT

ANU Voice Poetry Slam

Context

The Australian National University's (ANU) Voice Poetry Slam project is one example of a new partnership that resulted from the networking activities of Libraries ACT staff during the National Year of Reading. The ANU Student Equity unit and Libraries ACT collaborated on the Voice Poetry Slam project, holding a series of poetry events in 2012. Funded via the federal government Higher Education Participation and Partnership scheme, the purpose of the ANU Student Equity unit is to engage students from low socioeconomic or disadvantaged backgrounds in projects that are aspiration-building as a way of encouraging them into higher education. This generally involves partnering with schools in areas of disadvantage to build curriculum enrichment programs that meet an area of focus identified by the school.

Programs and activities implemented during the National Year of Reading

The Voice Poetry Slam project gave students from targeted public secondary schools the opportunity to participate in workshops that explored how to write and present poetry in the hip hop and rap style and to then share their writing in a public forum. *Fundamental to the idea of poetry slams is the recognition that everyone has different things to say, and different ways of saying them. Poetry Slam is about encouraging that diversity and celebrating our differences through a common medium* ("Voice Poetry Slam," n.d.). The Voice Poetry Slam consisted of three smaller events (mini slams) that were hosted by Libraries ACT at Kippa, Erindale and Gungahlin libraries from April to July, and the final event (Grand Slam) which was hosted at the ANU Acton campus in August.

Reaching the target audience

The Voice Poetry Slam workshops and events were mostly promoted by advertising via posters and newsletters within each partner school and this was supported by a Facebook page which was dedicated to the project (https://www.facebook.com/ANUvoiceslam?ref=hl). The project organisers thought that the social media aspect worked well with the students who regularly engaged with the Facebook page and shared videos clips of their poetry readings. Additionally, links to the ANU Voice Slam Facebook page were added to the ANU website and the Canberra Centenary website.
Monitoring and evaluation

ANU staff gathered a range of data to help them evaluate the success of the Voice Poetry Slam including: surveying the students attending poetry workshops; gathering anecdotal feedback from teachers in partner schools; counting the numbers of participants at each event; and surveying the audience at the Grand Slam event. A formal report about the Voice Poetry Slam project was compiled for funding providers and it was anticipated that a journal would be published of the students’ poetry.

When reflecting on the success of the project, the ANU staff considered that some of events were more successful than others depending on the strength of their partnership with the schools involved. Some schools had established a partnership with ANU prior to participating in the Voice Poetry Slam project and others were more recent partners, with the relationship between the ANU organisers and the students needing time to develop. The slam events were most successful when a strong relationship existed between ANU staff and the students of the schools involved and the project had been well supported by the teaching staff. During the Grand Slam, ANU staff were buoyed by the way that students from schools that had been engaging with the poetry slam for some time acted as role models for students from the targeted group of newer partner schools that had only just begun to participate in the event.

The objectives of the Voice Poetry Slam project connected very well with the focus of the National Year of Reading and the organisers believed that the National Year of Reading branding lent authority to the project and raised its profile. While Omar Musa, one of the ACT National Year of Reading ambassadors attended the Grand Slam, the project organisers consider that they could have made more of their partnership with Libraries ACT by using the ACT National Year of Reading ambassadors to promote events and to give more publicity to the project. However, they felt they lacked the time and resources to make the most of this.

Legacy

A range of good partnerships resulted from the Voice Poetry Slam project and will ensure its sustainability into the future. As well as generating a new partnership with Libraries ACT in 2012, the project helped reinforce ANU’s existing school partnerships and initiate several new ones. In 2013, ANU staff plan to build on what has been achieved in the National Year of Reading with their new partner schools and to continue their partnership with the Libraries ACT. Additionally, the project organisers established some new relationships with coordinators of national poetry slam events as well as with those in New South Wales during the National Year of Reading. In 2013, they hoped to cultivate these new relationships whilst also developing new partnerships with the coordinators of poetry slams in other states and territories.

Finding 3.2.5

The Voice Poetry Slam project was the result of new collaboration between Libraries ACT and the ANU Student Diversity Unit which aims to engage disadvantaged students in projects that encourage their participation in higher education.

The Voice Poetry Slam project brought in new students from public secondary schools located in areas of disadvantage. Facebook was found to be a particularly useful engagement tool for this target audience.

ANU staff believed that the National Year of Reading branding lent authority to the project and raised its profile and that they could have maximised this by drawing on ACT National Year of Reading ambassadors to promote events and to give more publicity to the project.

The National Year of Reading connection provided project organisers with the opportunity to make links with other poetry slam events in other states.

As a result of implementing the Voice Poetry Slam project as a National Year of Reading initiative, ANU has been able to strengthen existing school partnerships as well as to generate partnerships with new partner schools, the Libraries ACT, and coordinators of other poetry slam events which it believes will ensure the project’s future sustainability.
The National Year of Reading Alexander Maconochie Centre Poetry Competition

Context
Susan Lavery is the librarian at the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC), which is the only correction centre in the ACT. The AMC is run by the ACT Corrective Services, an agency with the ACT's Justice and Community Safety Directorate (JACS), and commenced operations in 2009. It houses close to 300 men and women who have been sentenced to a term of imprisonment or are on remand.

Susan has been employed at the AMC since it opened and is probably one of the only trained librarians working within a prison context in Australia. While most detainees have access to books and reading materials in Australian prisons the levels of available funding do not necessarily stretch to allow them onsite access to libraries. For Susan, the investment in both a library and a professional librarian by the ACT Corrective Services sets the AMC apart from other correctional institutions.

Given the strong correlation between a lack of literacy and recidivism, the ACT Corrective Services places a significant emphasis on increasing the literacy levels of detainees as part of their through care. Consequently, in her role as librarian, Susan tries to foster the interest of detainees in reading and in books by giving them as much access to the library as she can. If detainees have limited physical access to the library facilities, she packs books onto a trolley and takes the library to them. In addition, detainees who have a computer are able to access the library collection electronically.

Susan publicises any new books that are bought for the library and she responds to reader requests by making sure her purchases reflect the interests and literacy capacities of the detainees. She spends a good deal of time networking with detainees as they access texts from the library and she pays attention to their individual reading preferences so that she can tailor her recommendations to their personal needs and preferences. Susan also keeps an eye out for individuals who consider themselves non-readers and she assembles articles, books and pictures around topics of interest to them. Susan also refers detainees with low levels of literacy to education staff for further support.

Programs and activities implemented during the National Year of Reading
Susan joined the National Year of Reading ACT Steering Committee and became a member of the sub-committee for the The Reading Hour. While she was keen to celebrate the National Year of Reading, Susan realised there were a limited number of initiatives that she could undertake at the AMC given the constraints of the custodial setting. However, she had noticed that a large number of detainees, particularly men, wrote poetry or drew for their own entertainment and so she believed a poetry competition could be successful.

The National Year of Reading AMC Poetry Competition was clearly branded a National Year of Reading event and contestants were invited to write an original poem to enter into the competition. While the competition focused on writing, it also promoted reading, as each contestant was given a personal copy of a book of poems. Since most detainees had very little money, it was thought that a monetary prize would be a big draw-card for the detainees, and consequently, three first place prizes of $100 were offered, as well as three runner-up prizes of $50, and further three encouragement prizes of $20. Given the prison policies
concerning money, it was essential that all prize money was placed directly into the correction centre accounts of the respective prize winners. Additionally, in order to keep the competition as impartial as possible and to ensure the anonymity of the detainees, each poem that was entered into the competition was de-identified and a panel of judges external to the AMC was appointed.

**Reaching the target audience**

Susan promoted the event by putting up flyers and she also spoke to the detainees it, particularly those who had previously shown an interest in writing poetry. Additionally, she asked staff to show their support by encouraging detainees to enter their work.

**Monitoring and evaluation**

The competition attracted a good deal of interest from the detainees and there were 30 entries. When the judging had concluded and the results were announced, Susan noted the winners reacted with great excitement. She also reported that some of the detainees who had not won were interested to know what they could do to improve their writing. While she would have liked to conclude the competition with some form of public recognition, this was difficult to organise in the AMC context and Susan chose instead to give the winners a certificate and to congratulate them personally.

When reflecting on the competition, Susan stated that without some kind of closing event the competition seemed to fade at the finish. Nonetheless, she had received positive feedback from some of the detainees who had enjoyed reading their book of poems. She had also noticed that many more poetry books were borrowed from the library. Susan hoped that the detainees’ poems would be collated into a book to share and she planned to publish them in a periodical newsletter that she produced for the detainees. In addition, she reported that the National Year of Reading had been very valuable. She felt that one of the biggest benefits of the National Year of Reading was that it re-emphasised the significance of reading and literacy to people’s lives and that, overall, the partnership with the National Year of Reading had been very valuable.

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**INSPIRATION THY BOOK**

Reading books is like mining for gold, 
For gems, not to mention ancient artefacts and 
Fossils of the long since departed and beautiful 
If a single short story can lift me up, 
From my place of mourning, 
Back to battle, to my “calling”, 
Then what else is yet to be discovered? 
In this vast storehouse of the human perception. 

Why something does what it does – Our Science, 
A travel guide’s hilarious opinions, 
What madness lurks in the hearts of Men? 
What miracles also! 

Gripping thriller mixed with love story, 
Highest hopes, lowest heartbreaks 
Triumph 
Through recovery – my own personal story, 
A lesson learned – Knowledge is Freedom!
It is Hope, Peace, and Security 
(and power is overrated)

(Poem entered in the AMC Poetry Competition, 2012)

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**Finding 3.2.6**

Involvement in the Libraries ACT steering committee provided the librarian at the Alexander Maconochie Centre (AMC), a correction centre in the ACT, with the inspiration and impetus to run a poetry competition for detainees.

This initiative was a new and popular element of the drive to improve the literacy levels of detainees. The number of entries suggested a high take up by detainees (approximately 10% of the centre’s population).

The National Year of Reading provided a unique opportunity to pilot a library-based event in the AMC environment and now that the challenging processes and protocols for organising and running the competition are in place, it is anticipated the competition will run again in 2013.

The librarian found one of the biggest benefits of the National Year of Reading was that it re-emphasised the significance of reading and literacy to people’s lives and that, overall, the partnership with the National Year of Reading had been valuable for AMC detainees.
Profile Three: National Year of Reading in Western Australia

Context

The State Library of Western Australia (SLWA) is a portfolio organisation within the WA Department of Culture and the Arts, overseen by the Minister and Library Board of WA. Located in the Perth CBD’s Cultural Centre, the mission of the SLWA is to enrich the lives of Western Australians by: enabling access to resources for information, learning, enterprise and recreation; and collecting and preserving our social and documentary heritage for current and future generations.

Literacy is a fundamental issue for libraries and librarians, and it’s important that we’re engaged in that space. As I’ve said to people, 46% of the population don’t have the skills that they need. If you want to look at it in really crude terms, it’s a threat to libraries because if you have people who can’t read, they have no need for libraries. If people haven’t got the basic reading skills, they’re not going to use or want the services.

Margaret Allen, CEO SLWA

The SLWA also provides public library collections of catalogued books and other materials, and facilitates the provision of a wide range of information services to the WA public through a state wide network of 232 public libraries managed by local governments. The partnership between state and local governments and their libraries, a key focus of SLWA, is maintained through consultation, joint decision making and agreed standards. The Library is supported by the State Library Foundation of WA (SLFWA), which builds relationships with a wide range of community and commercial partners to fund, support, create and manage SLWA projects.

The SLFWA’s key roles with regard to the National Year of Reading were to coordinate the WA National Year of Reading Stakeholder Group and to seek funding to enable a range of activities to occur in 2012. The project began under the leadership of SLFWA director Bronwyn Lewis in 2010 and continued with her successor Jane King in 2012.

One of the highest profile programs developed and delivered by SLWA is the Better Beginnings program. Developed as an early literacy and family literacy program in 2004, the Better Beginnings program aims to: build awareness in the whole community of the value of reading and sharing stories with young children from birth; encourage and support parents in sharing books and activities that foster language and a love of reading with their young children; and promote the vital role of public libraries as community hubs that provide ongoing support to parents and caregivers in giving their children a love of reading.
Through support by Rio Tinto and the WA State Government, Better Beginnings has grown over the past eight years to include a birth to three years program, a four to five year old preschool program, a new pilot six to nine year old program and targeted resources for Aboriginal and culturally and linguistically diverse families and communities. A new program to support adult literacy was rolled out in 2012 as a National Year of Reading branded pilot project.

The Better Beginnings program is delivered in partnership with public libraries, which has resulted in SLWA having a key leadership role in promoting literacy throughout WA.

The SLWA's chief executive officer, Margaret Allen, reflected that the National Year of Reading provided an opportunity to expand this role to focus on literacy within the SLWA itself, which she views as critical for the future of the library. She noted that it is important for SLWA to advocate for the issues of low literacy within WA and nationally as a critical issue for the Australian workforce and wider community. To this end, the focus of SLWA's involvement in the National Year of Reading was to support people of all ages to engage in reading, and promote the pleasure and importance of reading.

Organisational structures

The SLWA's strategies and outcomes are delivered through four directorates: Client Services; Collection Services; Community, Learning and Discovery; and Strategic and Corporate Services. The manager of the Participation and Learning team, which sits within the Community Learning and Discovery directorate, had the responsibility to oversee the day to day implementation of National Year of Reading outcomes within the State Library. This team delivers a range of services, which aim to engage and enrich clients' experiences when they access the SLWA's resources.

This includes such things as a program of annual events incorporating writing workshops for children and adults, and a selection of literacy sessions that support the public to access the SLWA's services and collections. The team also manages The Place, which is a dedicated space within the SLWA for families and children to read and to learn through play together.

In the two years leading up to the National Year of Reading, the SLFWA and SLWA identified a range of organisations who would come together to form a stakeholder group to guide the SLWA's National Year of Reading plans. The National Year of Reading WA Stakeholder Committee comprised representatives from the SLWA and SLFWA, the Public Library Association of WA, Department of Education, SLWA sponsors such as Rio Tinto, literacy focused groups such as Writing WA, and a range of not-for-profit and business organisations with a keen interest in raising literacy levels in Australia. This group informed the SLWA's decisions about National Year of Reading activities, ambassadors, and key messages, and it assisted in the identification of potential partners, resource options and promotional strategies. Since it was important to engage members of the National Year of Reading WA Stakeholder Committee early on in the year, a meeting was organised immediately prior to the opening of the Love2Read Café in January 2012. Following this meeting, members of the stakeholder committee were able to join in the Love2Read Café launch celebrations and listen to the Culture and the Arts Minister for WA, John Day, talk about the importance of the National Year of Reading, thus giving committee members some key messages with which to advocate for the National Year of Reading during 2012.

Partnerships

Strengthening and developing partnerships was a key aim of the SLWA's involvement in the National Year of Reading. Prior to the National Year of Reading, the SLWA had a range of funding and program partners who supported and complemented their work, including Rio Tinto, the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority, the Perth International Arts Festival, the City of Perth and local authors. These partnerships have been strengthened through a range of National Year of Reading initiatives. New partnerships have also been formed with organisations where the SLFWA has sought sponsorship and funding for key National Year of Reading projects and initiatives, including: the Sidney Myer Fund in 2011, which supplemented funding provided by the National Year of Reading founder partners to establish the National Year of Reading; the McCusker Foundation Grant in 2011, which funded the capital costs associated with the Love2Read Café; the DLS Laundry Services sponsorship in 2012, which supported the Laundry Reads project, and the Lotterywest Grant in 2012, which facilitated The Advertising Campaign about the National Year of Reading, the Read Out Loud! community event, and support for public libraries activities throughout Western Australia. More specifically, the support for the public library network included: the development and distribution of a Public Library Kit, a toolkit of ideas and resources for suggested activities and events; the provision of small grants of up to $1,000 to enable public libraries to stage an event or activity; and access to the Writers on the Road program. Writers on the Road was coordinated by Writing WA which organised for regional public libraries to host a visiting children's author or illustrator and to conduct workshops and readings for children and school groups. Eleven authors were expected to participate in the Writers on the Road program and it would visit 17 regional locations during the National Year of Reading.

Finding 3.3.1

The SLWA has an existing leadership role in the promotion of literacy within the WA public library system and the National Year of Reading has not only supported this public library leadership role, but also extended this to a focus on the promotion of literacy within the SLWA itself.

Strengthening and developing partnerships has been a key aim of the SLWA's involvement in National Year of Reading, and the campaign has resulted in a range of new projects, resources, activities and opportunities both for SLWA and the public libraries network.
Programs and activities implemented during the National Year of Reading

There were a number of key programs developed by SLWA as part of the National Year of Reading and some of these are profiled here.

Love2Read Café

The Love2Read Café was an outdoor reading room located at the entrance of SLWA in the Perth Cultural Centre. It was the SLWA’s flagship initiative to kick-start the National Year of Reading. Comfortable chairs, beanbags and a range of reading materials were provided for the public to enjoy, along with a program of free events such as book signings, author talks, children’s activities and live music.

Although the SLWA staff had developed the café concept prior to the National Year of Reading, they reported that the National Year of Reading had provided the impetus and opportunity to seek funding and partnerships to implement the project. A new partnership was formed with the McCusker Foundation, a charitable organisation supporting health and education projects in Western Australia, which provided funding for the infrastructure for the Love2Read Café project. In addition, the Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority, a second partner to the SLWA and the organisation that manages the Cultural Centre precinct housing the library and café, provided funding in the form of a $10,000 grant which was used to fund many of the events held at the Love2Read Café.

A total of 3,454 people visited the café or took part in the program of events. While the numbers varied depending on other events in the Cultural Centre and the City of Perth, SLWA staff reported that many of the café’s patrons included overseas visitors, workers from the surrounding areas who were having lunch (including SLWA staff), local authors, people wishing to improve their English, avid readers, and families with small children. Feedback from the visitors to the café was extremely supportive and appreciative, with most patrons commending the SLWA for a terrific initiative.

As the first major National Year of Reading project implemented by SLWA, the successful launch of the Love2Read Café also drew significant interest from the media and enabled the SLWA to develop and strengthen relationships with journalists, not only for the National Year of Reading but for future events, projects and campaigns.

We are very happy to come to National Year of Reading 2012 Reading Café, especially my two little children. We come to the Reading Café to read and play with toys on every weekend, and sometimes during the week my son asks me to take him here. The people who help at the Reading Café are very friendly, they are very patient with kids and kindly encourage children to read and play with the toys. Thanks for organising such an amazing event that benefits not only for the children today but their future reading interest as well.

Patron, Love2Read Café, SLWA