



The Bess Thomas Award recipients

2016

Winner: City of Darwin Libraries, NT

Through their "Get that Job" programme, City of Darwin Libraries have provided a wonderful and innovative program to the youth of Darwin.

Having identified a critical issue of youth unemployment and work preparedness, the library team then responded by providing training sessions in practical and relevant work related skills. Recognizing and supporting the City of Darwin's Youth Strategy goal, the team ensured inclusivity by targeting all local youth, including disadvantaged and local indigenous communities. Participation rates were high and connecting participants with prospective employers was a major positive outcome.

The library team have also provided a new role for the library as a safe and valuable place to be, for the wider Darwin community.

2014

Winner: Parkes Shire Library, NSW

READtember is a literacy project that Parkes Shire Library has programmed and delivered with creative learning consultant, Dr Matt Finch, since 2011. The range of activities engaging young people in the community has included: Time Travel Detectives a spooky interactive mystery, featuring the work of multimedia artist Peter Miller, Big Box Battle a three day event inspired by movies like Pacific Rim and Godzilla and led by teenagers who created costumes, performed and played with children aged 5 and up, Authorised an adult and teen writing group that worked together to create the Stories on Coffee cups supported by the Shire's cafes and restaurants, Zombie wars were fought between students of Parkes High School, Tullamore and Trundle High at Tullamore showground using books to locate skills and clues, LitVids students produced trailers for their favourite books and explored the world of book publishing and marketing.

READtember highlights the library's profile by receiving lots of local media coverage. The project also engages many other groups in the community, including local high schools.

Honourable mention: Randwick City Library, NSW

The Spark! Science Club offers a range of programs in the library for 312 year olds, young scientists in residence and a scientific competition. The library also loans a range of science kits



for home activities including magnetism, weather watching, minibeasts, astronomy and backyard botany.

2012

Winner: Logan City Council Libraries, QLD

Logan City Council is located on the Queensland Gold Coast and is a very multicultural community of 280,000 people from more than 185 different cultures. The LEGO Literacy Club is a program delivered monthly at five of the nine libraries. The program is aimed at children from Prep to Year 7 and their parents/carers. LEGO Literacy Club is a creative and attractive program for children to experiment with verbal, written and visual language. The program was designed to engage with existing library users and attract a new audience of young people and their parents/carers to the libraries. Each session features a particular theme eg. Insects, transport, pirates etc. which is then linked to the library collection and online resources.

Play has been shown to impact creativity, problem-solving skills, memory, language and attention span among children. LEGO Literacy Club uses play-based learning to develop foundation, early literacy and family literacy skills of young people and their parents/carers.

2010

Winner: Kogarah Library, NSW

Kogarah City is located in the southern suburbs of Sydney, it is an area of significant diversity in its language, culture and religion. On two Friday nights during the winter holidays, the Kogarah Library HSC LOCK IN turns over the Library exclusively to final year high school students from closing time (7pm) until midnight. Students are invited to escape from their crowded work desks at home and join the friendly, collegiate (and warm!) atmosphere of the Library as they make their final preparations before the Trial HSC exams. Each night is entirely free of charge and features seminars, tutors, food, security, as well as full access to the Library's internet connected PCs and HSC resources.

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

Each night begins with a one hour seminar which specifically relates to better exam performance. The remainder of each night is structured around small group tuition, food and drink breaks, and the option for short one-on-one tutorial sessions. Students are free to study on



their own, or form study groups, or join tutorial sessions or simply enjoy the exclusive use of Kogarah Library's resources.

Honourable mention: Mid-Western Regional Library Lego Library Legends

Lego Library Legends

This proposed initiative has been inspired by a similar program at Radnor Memorial Library, Wayne, Philadelphia. It should be mentioned as it aims to outreach to families particularly boys who often lose interest in reading. The aim is to integrate play with literacy.

2008

Winner: Bidyadanga Community Library, WA

Bidyadanga is the second largest remote community in Western Australia with a population of 650-800. Until September 2007 the nearest library was 200km away in Broome. Literacy levels in the community are below the State average and in 2004 a survey was conducted in the community that found the average number of books per household was 1-2.

Deborah Hallett, a teacher at La Grange Remote Community School was determined that this needed to change. She consulted with locals and worked with her school colleagues; developed partnerships with State Library of Western Australia and the Shire of Broome, obtained funding for \$100,000 from the Ian Thorpe Foundation to make the library sustainable for the next five years, purchased shelving, library equipment, a library management system and developed a relevant, high interest collection, recruited a library officer.

The Bidyadanga Community Library opened on the 17th September 2007. The library opening was hailed as the most inclusive community event held in Bidyadanga –children danced, elders spoke, the school and community worked together in the biting hot sun to make the occasion one to remember.

2006

Winner: Auburn Library, NSW

Drawn to Auburn: This year's award is presented to Auburn Library for an innovative library program for young people which addresses a library graffiti problem in a creative way through the creation of a mural. The benefits of developing the self esteem of the young people involved should not be underestimated and the finished mural will demonstrate to visitors that the Library values the cultural diversity of the community it serves. The project involves library staff in working with other sections of local government and community groups and is based on relevant research.



Honourable mention: Launceston Library, TAS

Writing Workshops for Boys was an innovative idea to build on a writing workshops by having student employees record the stories and making them available as podcasts. It is a great idea to use this technology to add value for the boys who write the stories, experience for students who record them and to enhance image of the library.

Honourable mention: Fairfield City Library Service, NSW

Junction ATLAS Library Education program: Libraries are for everyone and tailoring a library program for clients with special needs is to be commended. Helping these young people become independent users of the library is a great achievement. The fact that the program can be adapted for other groups and is not dependent upon the expertise of just one staff member but can be delivered by other staff is a big plus.

2004

Winner: Salisbury Library Service in South Australia

Blue Cat Café: This year's Bess Thomas award is presented to Salisbury Library Service in South Australia. Brodie Evitts and the Salisbury team developed the Blue Cat Café; an acoustic music and entertainment event where young people have the opportunity to showcase their talents in front of a live audience. The café began as part of Youth Week celebrations and due to its popularity and success has become a regular library event.

Young people are involved in the planning and running of the Blue Cat Café. Members of the Youth Advisory Council designed registration forms and advertising flyers while youth volunteers help in setting up the café and running the event. As a result of consultation with young people attending the Blue Cat Café different school holiday activities and writing competitions have been offered at the libraries.

The café also showcases the talents of local youth to the wider community. Some high school music students use the Blue Cat Café to meet their public performance requirements of the year 11 and 12 curriculum.

Honourable mention: City of Stirling Libraries

Expand your mind postcard competition: Local high school students designed postcards to promote the libraries using the 'Expand your mind @ your Stirling library' slogan. The winning entries for each year were professionally printed as glossy postcards. 3000 cards (six hundred of each of the five winning designs) were distributed in local cafes, cinemas and stores by Avant Card over the summer holidays.



Honourable mention: Mackay City Council Library Services and Mackay West State School

Productive partnerships public and school libraries promote lifelong learning: This comprehensive program of cooperation has greatly increased student membership at the public library and improved learning outcomes for students. The program includes four key elements; work shadowing for staff, library monitor program, grade ones at the library (GOAL) program and assignment posting on the school website.

2002

Winner: Inglewood Public Library, WA

One of the City of Stirling libraries in Perth, Western Australia: The assistant branch librarian at Inglewood Library, Francine Nababan, set out to increase use of the library by teenagers by working with year 7 students at the local primary school to update the image of the "young adult" area at the library.

The project was a co-operative one between the local school and the library. The class chose a theme, and designed images that were used to silk screen cushions, a huge wall hanging and floor mats. The class also made a pottery sign for the area. The library also purchased some new furniture for the space.

2000

Winner: Yarra-Melbourne Regional Library Corporation, VIC

Youthlink Infoexchange: This service provides young people with free access to computers with internet applications, Microsoft Office, web page design, digital imaging software, typing and games applications. Free training in the use of the software is provided.

1998

Winner: Logan Shire Library, QLD

WWW Winning Writers Workshop: The winners of the *Libraries, young people's story writing competition* extended their skills and future development by attending a creative writing workshop. The workshop leader being a well-known young people's author.



1996

Winner: Ashfield Library Service, NSW

Youth drama program: A series of after school workshops for older children dealing with drama and the performing arts.

