

Name of Library	Rockhampton Regional Library	
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Title of project/innovation/initiative	Living History Walks
Date initiated	7 July 2011
Date completed	28 July 2011

The issue/challenge

The beautiful mild winter weather attracts a huge number of visitors to the region each year, with many interested in family and local history research. The opening of the new History Centre at the Rockhampton Regional Library at the end of June saw many people using the facilities and enquiring about local historical buildings.

The Living History Walks were an attempt to link the stories of the physical architecture of Rockhampton's heritage listed Quay Street streetscape to the archives and special collections of the Rockhampton History Centre. The outreach program proved immensely popular for tourists, long term residents, and those new to the community, with each guided history tour heavily booked. The potential for collection development in the special collections, cultural tourism, and recruitment for history volunteers has been impressive with a number of outcomes as a result of the initiative.

Project details

Capricornia's winter weather is one of our most marketable features with heritage activities high on the list of visitor's agendas. Combining this with the exponential interest in family history and heritage, there are many opportunities for libraries to engage with creative programming activities.

Linking the architecture and social history of the heritage-listed Quay Street precinct with the archives and special collections in the new Rockhampton History Centre proved a strategic and immensely enjoyable interactive activity each Thursday morning in July with guided history walks conducted and tagged as 'Living History Walks'.

The history tours were fully booked for each 90 minute session, and involved library staff escorting a group on a gentle stroll from the Rockhampton Regional Library

down to the riverbank area and sharing stories about some of the significant heritage listed buildings along Quay Street.

The mix of long-term and new residents, as well as tourists proved an engaging combination, as stories and entertaining 'off-beat' anecdotes were shared about the buildings and social history of the area. A number of younger library members took part in the walks, as well as many retirees. The Living History Walks proved a strategic way to recruit donations for the special collections with a number of significant contributions made in ensuing months.

The tour finished with entry back into the Library via the historic School of Arts building, and an invitation to visit the new History Centre. Each participant was given a packet of promotional material including brochures for accessing historical databases, as well as information about forthcoming historical tours of the Yeppoon Cemetery and other heritage programming.

The Living History Walks were immensely popular and proved valuable in focusing interest on the new Rockhampton History Centre.