

Name of Library	Rockhampton Regional Libraries - Mount Morgan Library	
Address	P.O.Box 1860 Rockhampton QLD	
Phone	07 4936 8043	
Contact person	Ann-Maree Dyer	
Email	Ann-Maree.Dyer@rrc.qld.gov.au	

Title of project/innovation/initiative	'Let's Read' Party and Library Outreach
Date initiated	1 August 2013
Date completed	5 September 2013

The issue/challenge

A timely collaboration with the literacy organisation 'Let's Read' to celebrate the organisation's sixth birthday in the Mount Morgan community raised the profile of the Mount Morgan Library and resulted in a successful membership drive.

Project details

The challenge to promote literacy and library services to the community constantly involves creative strategies to entice new members. A partnership between Rockhampton Regional Libraries and the 'Let's Read' program in the Mount Morgan area proved a successful combination to encourage literacy initiatives and drive library membership in the community.

The Smith Family funded literacy program 'Let's Read' has been operating out of the small town of Mount Morgan (population 3000) in the Rockhampton Regional Council area for the past six years. In 2011, the Mount Morgan district scores 797.6 on the SEIFA index of disadvantage, indicating it is the most disadvantaged area in the Rockhampton region. Rockhampton Regional Libraries partnered with the 'Let's Read' community program to collaboratively market the importance of libraries and literacy initiatives in the community.

A photographic competition of parents or carers reading to their child or children formed the basis of the celebratory event. Entries in the competition were mounted in the Mount Morgan Library with an official function and party taking place in the library precinct on the same day. A library stall set up outside the library allowed for a membership drive.

An invitation from the local school for library staff to speak on parade in the lead up to the event highlighted the library service and the 'Let's Read' Party. Fliers were handed out to students on parade prior to the party, and to parents dropping students

off the school the morning of the event. The local newspaper *The Argus* featured prominent stories and advertisements promoting the event.

The colourful and lively event located both inside and outside the library in early September piqued interest from the community, highlighted by the rhythmic beat of djembe drums from the Kraatz African Drum Library collection. A balloon-festooned library stall was set up on the apron outside the historic Mount Morgan School of Arts with party food and drinks supplied by 'Let's Read' in the same area. A grassy area next door to the School of Arts building was used with different activity stations utilising toys and games from the Mount Morgan Sports Equipment Library, part of Rockhampton Regional Libraries' collection. A data presentation of the 'Let's Read' project was displayed in the library, with a storytelling station and craft area set up to further engage the audience.

New members joining the library on the day went in a lucky draw to win double passes to see a chamber performance at Council's Pilbeam Theatre proving an added incentive. The Mayor officiated at the event with 'Let's Read' volunteers and library staff assisting on the day, squeezing into every conceivable space in the tiny library. Of course with any birthday party there was a cake and obligatory singing of the happy birthday song before all child participants received a 'Let's Read' book bag containing a book and information about the library service.

The event proved a resounding success for the branch library with good numbers attending the function and also joining the library service. The goodwill generated by the event and subsequent positioning of the library as an active learning and literacy space served as a strategic reminder to stakeholders of the importance and value of libraries in the community.



Figure 1: Drummer at 'Let's Read Party'



Figure 2: Utilising the Sports Equipment Library at the 'Let's Read Party'