Queensland Public Libraries Association 2026

Winning The Next Generation Of Library Users

Hey Team,

Thank you for joining me as we explored what the next generation of library users are looking for and how libraries can continue evolving as places of connection, discovery and community.

With Gen Z and Gen Alpha already representing around one third of the Australian population, younger audiences are bringing new expectations around how they discover what's happening, the experiences they choose to participate in and the spaces they want to keep coming back to.

At the same time, libraries are serving multiple generations with very different needs, habits and expectations. The opportunity is not to design everything for one generation, but to understand what different users value and create flexible experiences that give more people a reason to engage.

Here are a few of the key ideas from our session exploring 'Winning The Next Generation Of Library Users'.

Key Themes Covered

Here are three key themes to keep in mind as you think about how your library can engage the next generation and continue evolving for the communities you serve.

Connection Is Changing

Young people are still looking for community, but the way they find it is evolving. From puppies and pilates and creative workshops to third spaces and low-pressure social events, connection is increasingly being built around shared interests, experiences and activities that make meeting others feel natural.

Create A Reason To Visit

If information, entertainment and services can increasingly be accessed online, the physical experience matters more than ever to get people participating in person. Spaces that encourage discovery, interaction and something new each time give people a reason to visit, spend time and keep coming back.

Different Generations, Different Expectations

There is no single "library user". Different generations discover opportunities differently, value different experiences and have different reasons for returning. Generational insights can give us a useful starting point, but the goal is to understand the people and communities we are actually designing for.

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Three Key Actionables

When you head back to your libraries, here are three things I would consider actioning from the presentation:

Make It Easy To Say Yes

Lower the barrier to getting involved. Consider smaller, one-off and low-commitment experiences that people can easily try without feeling like they are signing up for an ongoing program. Give them an easy first interaction, then create reasons for them to return.

Consider How You Spread The Word

Meet people on the platforms they already use and create content that feels natural there. Show the personalities behind your library, use humour and relatable moments and think beyond simply promoting programs towards creating content people actually want to watch, share and talk about.

Ask Before You Assume

Take time to understand why people are visiting, what they are interested in and what they are trying to achieve. Speak with different generations in your community, test ideas before launching them and use those insights to shape experiences around real needs rather than assumptions.

Keep Exploring

If this session has sparked your thinking about how Gen Z are approaching community, culture and connection, here are a few other articles you might like to explore:

Run Clubs Are The New Nightclubs: What activewear, acai bowls and run clubs reveal about the future of work, wellness and connection.
www.iamscottmillar.com/post/run-clubs-are-the-new-nightclubs

How To Attract Gen Z Customers: How Gen Z discover products, what they expect from brands and what you can do to turn attention into loyalty.
www.iamscottmillar.com/post/how-to-attract-gen-z-customers

Engaging Gen Z Volunteers: Understanding how Gen Z is reshaping volunteering, community and impact for the future.
www.iamscottmillar.com/post/engaging-gen-z-volunteers

Thanks again for taking the time to join me as we explored the next generation of library users. I can't wait to see how you take some of these ideas back to your libraries and use them to create spaces, programs and experiences that give every generation a reason to discover, connect and keep coming back.

Chat soon,

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