

# Library gains Australia's highest business accolade

Felicity McGregor, university librarian, University of Wollongong



The University of Wollongong Library has won an Australian Business Excellence Award, becoming the first in its field to reach a national standard of performance excellence. The award was presented at a gala dinner held as part of an International Business Excellence Summit, 25–27 March. The awards were presented by Stella Axarlis, AM, Member of the Prime Minister's Science, Engineering and Innovation Council and managing director of Bilcon Engineering.

Australia's premier business awards are granted only to the best, with just 41 organisations winning at top levels since the awards were launched thirteen years ago. The winners list includes top-performing organisations of every size and sector from household names to small businesses.

University librarian, Felicity McGregor, said that thinking in business terms can help even not-for-profit organisations.

'The library environment is constantly changing with advances in information and communication technology, the scholarly publishing industry in transition and the increased diversity and competitiveness of higher education which affects us all. Coupled with a reduction in purchasing power caused by a weak dollar and publishers' price increases, managing change and driving improvement in this environment present considerable challenges.

'By using the Australian Business Excellence Framework as a management model, we are preparing for a future in which a lot of student learning will take place online and from off-campus locations. It also helps ensure that we have systems in place for involving the staff and students of the university in planning

and evaluating both present and future services. Judging by the positive feedback we receive, this strategy has worked very well in satisfying the needs of students, teachers and researchers.'

Some of the achievements of which the library is particularly proud are: substantially increased access to information resources — especially databases and journal articles; significant increase in satisfaction with the availability of library materials as evidenced by a recent Client Survey; reduction in processing costs — enabling the library to resource the management of new services such as electronic access; and the commitment of library staff to providing the best possible services to the university community.

University vice-chancellor, Professor Gerard Sutton, said: 'The library has led the way in managing many of the changes occurring in the higher education sector and I am confident that they will continue to rise to the challenges facing the university — in supporting remote and flexible delivery, exploitation of the potential of e-commerce and the expansion of the university's global presence and influence.'

**Footnote:** As part of the International Business Excellence Summit, the library staffed a stand in the Exhibition Hall to provide information to conference participants. It was interesting to be on the 'supplier' side for a change as librarians usually attend conference exhibitions as customers. Although not selling anything, there was a huge amount of interest in the University of Wollongong Library Quality and Service Excellence program, particularly from non-profit and public sector organisations. ■

*Staff of the University of Wollongong Library celebrate following the award announcement.*



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