

Indigenous knowledge centres on track in Queensland

On 20 November 2002 the fifth in a series of thirty-one Indigenous Knowledge Centres was launched with the opening of the Binal Mungka Bayen Knowledge Centre in Wujal Wujal in Far North Queensland.

The State Library of Queensland is working with local community councils to establish Indigenous Knowledge Centres in Indigenous communities throughout Queensland.

The Binal Mungka Bayen Knowledge Centre in Wujal Wujal joins two Indigenous Knowledge Centres in the Torres Strait and two others in Cape York.

State librarian Lea Giles-Peters said, 'Indigenous Knowledge Centres are being established in communities to improve service delivery and access for Indigenous peoples across the State. The centres are more than the traditional library and will offer more than books. They will complement traditional library services with services based on the oral and visual traditions of Indigenous cultures.'

Ms Giles-Peters said, 'The Centres are designed to help capture the rich local history and traditions of communities and provide a repository of knowledge and information for future generations. They will also offer internet access and training programs, provide employment opportunities to local communities and serve as a community meeting place.'

The Indigenous Knowledge Centres have been developed through a consultation and negotiation process between the State Library and the Island Co-ordinating Council, the Aboriginal Co-ordinating Council, and other key community stakeholders.

As part of the State Library's Indigenous Library Services strategy, thirty-one Indigenous Knowledge Centres will be



The community of Wujal Wujal celebrates the opening of their Indigenous Knowledge Centre

opened from 2002. The State Library will also provide an advisory and training service to support public libraries in developing culturally appropriate collections and services, and develop an employment and training strategy to improve public library employment and training opportunities for Indigenous Queenslanders.

The strategy will also include the development of culturally appropriate services and facilities as part of the re-development of the State Library, due for completion in 2005.

The Indigenous Knowledge Centres form part of the Smart Library Network which integrates both physical and virtual community spaces and creatively links diverse groups of Queenslanders to information, knowledge and each other. ■

Student mentoring program wins university award

The Faculty of Information Technology at Queensland University of Technology has announced that Dr Gillian Hallam is the winner of the *Director of Teaching and Learning Innovation in Teaching Award 2002* in recognition of the work invested in the QUT/ALIA Queensland Student Mentoring Program.

This mentoring program was launched in July 2002 for students enrolled in the Professional Practice unit of the Graduate Diploma of Library and Information Studies at QUT. The program is a partnership between the Faculty, QUT Careers and Employment Office, and the ALIA Queensland Mentoring committee, with Gillian working closely with Kelly Meaney (QUT) and Chris Gissing (ALIA) to establish and run the program.

The response to the idea of a student mentoring program has been

overwhelming — when twenty-seven students put their hands up at the beginning of semester 2 to join, Kelly, Chris and Gillian faced the challenge of finding twenty-seven mentors to participate in the program. However, library and information professionals were keen to become involved, and the program quickly gained momentum.

To date, activities have not only included the one-to-one meetings, but there has been a strong social dimension — the students are certainly learning about the value of networking! A couple of workshops have been held and there are plans for a series of professional development workshops in 2003. A community website has also been established to encourage participants in the program to share views, ideas and resources.

The program is an example of 'transitional' mentoring as it covers

that critical transitional period from the classroom, through the fieldwork practicum and into the new workplace. It represents a new model of mentoring for both ALIA and for QUT. The Faculty of Information Technology is supporting the program with a Teaching and Learning Grant. The grant will fund research into best practice within mentoring programs for information professionals, and explore the learning and professional development outcomes for both students and their mentors.

Chris and Gillian presented a paper on the program at the UNISA/ALIA *Vital Link 3* conference held in Adelaide at the end of November, and Gillian spoke to the *QUT Effective Teaching and Learning Conference* in Brisbane to highlight the benefits to be gained from a collaborative program involving the university, industry and the professional association. ■