

The Toy Library Officer describes her volunteers as a wonderful resource without whom they would be lost and this description could equally apply to every other volunteer at Fremantle City Library. Most are retired people wanting to give back to their community and many of them do volunteer work in other sectors of the community as well as the time they give to the library. Their satisfaction from contributing to their community is high, and the assistance they give is not easily measured because of the improvement in service that results from their efforts.

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Volunteering at Royal Talbot

Royal Talbot Rehabilitation Centre is the rehabilitation campus of Austin Health in Victoria. We care for patients in the areas of stroke, head injury, spinal cord injury, amputation, and orthopaedics, and are most fortunate in having around 50 volunteers who support our patients in many ways. They cheerfully provide services to the Patient Library, the Royal Bazaar and Bookshop, Leisure Services, Art Therapy, Animal Therapy, Horticultural therapy, Woodworking, Patient Transport, and our extensive gardens. All our volunteers bring a special touch to these programs, helping to restore confidence in patients and creating a supportive and social atmosphere and a stepping stone to a positive future.

Royal Talbot is very fortunate, and most unusual, in having a patient library in addition to the Health Sciences Library. *Reflections* Patient Library has been operating since 1993, starting with 200 books and now offering over 4 000 items, including fiction and non-fiction books, talking books, DVDs, and CDs. It is available to patients, families, and staff, and also includes a Patient Education collection. The library could not operate without our wonderful volunteers, who issue loans, catalogue the books and audiovisual items, and provide a friendly ear to patients and family members who simply wish to chat. As many of our patients are long-term, families are often here for hours at a time, for weeks or even months, and our volunteers sometimes forge special relationships with patients and frequent visitors. One of our very clever volunteers has recently converted the card catalogue to an online resource so we can now offer both manual and computer access. Library usage increased by 51% from 2007 to 2008, which is a pleasing testament to the loyalty, reliability, and friendliness of the volunteers.

Currently we have 13 volunteers staffing the library for some hours of each weekday, and one evening. They are of varying ages and backgrounds, and some have been contributing their time for over 30 years. Some have been patients themselves at Royal Talbot and have been anxious to give something back, some have heard of the centre through family and friends, and others have responded to advertisements in the local paper.

In December each year we host a Volunteers' Thank You lunch and give each person a small gift of appreciation. In National Volunteer Week this year, we are providing an afternoon tea and we know that the volunteers will enjoy getting together and meeting those who are new, or who help out on other days and in other areas. It is a small way of acknowledging our appreciation of all the services they provide so willingly.

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Friends as volunteers

Friends of the Library, Launceston, has offered volunteer support for Launceston Library since 1992. The members of Friends, in partnership with the library, have developed a program of strategic activities and projects that helps the library extend its programs and achieve its goals. Friends contribute their differing knowledge, skills, and interests to enrich the library's resources, raise its profile in the community, and link its services to its users, especially those with special needs.

The Friends group has been a key player in the library's heritage publications program which has produced a number of valuable resources, including *On the Tide: stories of the Tamar and The journals of Charlotte Cleveland*.



Preparing for the fair

The Friends also work behind the scenes as part of the library's volunteer program in projects such as improving access to the library's heritage collections, organising ephemera collections, and attending events to promote the Launceston Library. Monthly Coffee Mornings with guest speakers help bring people to the library.

One major project has been the Launceston Family Album, carried out with the help of a grant from the Tasmanian Community Fun, and involving detailed genealogical research. <http://www.launcestonfamilyalbum.org.au/>

In partnership with a local Lions Club the Friends hold an annual book sale of donated items. The sales have generated over \$70,000 in extra funding for the Launceston Library.

In 2008 the Friends supported the Launceston Library in its winning of FOLA's inaugural Peter McInnes Award for innovation and excellence in services to children and young people.

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Volunteering at the State Library of Victoria

Volunteers have supported the work of the State Library for over 35 years – in special collection areas behind the scenes, in front-of-house activities such as tours of facilities and exhibitions, and in assisting the State Library of Victoria Foundation with fundraising projects.

The volunteer guides were established 13 years ago to introduce new users and visitors to library services and facilities, and now