

Singapore on show

The libraries of Singapore were the focus of a recent study tour led by the State Library of Western Australia. The tour group included a mix of state and local library staff, learning services staff and a library studies student, travelling to Singapore from Western Australia, South Australia and Victoria.

The tour began at the National Library for an overview of the role of the National Library Board (NLB) and their business services, a tour of the building and an introduction to the very successful NLB Academy, which has responsibility for the continuing learning and development of NLB staff as well as



Margaret Allen, CEO and State Librarian, State Library of Western Australia and Ms Ngian Lek Choh, Deputy Chief Executive and Director, National Library of Singapore

corporate customers. This was followed by a visit to the Library Supply Centre (LSC), which houses the Library Support Services Division of the NLB and has responsibility for acquisitions, cataloguing, and processing of all items, as well as being a repository for Used Collections (collections that are used less frequently). The LSC provides services to NLB libraries and external corporate customers.

The Jurong Regional Library provided us with an overview of public library services in Singapore, together with a wealth of information about the many programs offered to readers of all ages. Service offerings for children include the *10,000 Fathers Reading Program*, *kidsREAD*, *Quest*, *Fun with Tots*, and *Born-To-Read*, as well as storytime and school outreach programs. We also heard about services for young people including *READ! Singapore*, *Read and Reap*, and *What I Want the World to Read* programs. Before departing Jurong Library we were fortunate to have a look at 'Molly, the Mobile

Library'. 'Molly' visits institutions and organizations such as children's homes, special education schools, and selected primary schools to promote reading and lifelong learning. 'Molly' contains a targeted collection of over 3,000 items and is wireless-enabled to allow for all regular library transactions.

Our next visit was to library@esplanade, the Performing Arts Library. This boutique library is Singapore's first public library for the performing arts (music, dance, theatre and film) and is located at the bay at Marina Centre. The library comprises four 'villages' for music, dance, theatre and film, and features an exhibition space, a performing stage, a practice room, screening rooms, and a dance alley as well as a café inside the library. The view from the window was simply breathtaking, and included the new Singapore casino building in the Marina as well as the Singapore Flyer.

The Republic Polytechnic Library is located within the Woodlands Campus, Singapore. This library is divided into five zones, including an open gallery space in the central zone used for art installations and other performances. After leading a very hectic pace for several days, we were particularly impressed with the leg massaging chairs provided for use by library staff, and following rigorous testing of the chairs agreed that these would be a great innovation for Australia.

Our final visit was to the Cheng San Community Library, located in a shopping mall. Mall libraries are the smallest libraries in Singapore, with little seating for patrons. With a floor area of 1467sqm, Cheng San had a children's section, activities room for children, adult and young people's section, reference collection, multimedia services and self-check borrowing stations, and of the libraries we visited this was the one that most closely resembled Australian public libraries.

Throughout the study tour we were very impressed with the generosity of our Singapore colleagues - their hospitality, willingness to share information and patience with our many questions. The study group also concluded that another huge benefit of the tour had been the intra- and interstate sharing that occurred throughout the week. We all finished the study tour with many new friends and a greatly enhanced knowledge about each other's library services

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QUT hosts leading information literacy researcher

Dr Louise Limberg is an international leader in the field of information literacy and learning. Professor Emerita at the University of Borås in Sweden and Adjunct Professor at QUT, Dr Limberg is currently in Australia to present a series of seminars and contribute to a Doctoral Consortium. She will be visiting QUT between November 2010 and January 2011 to work with staff and students in the Information Studies Group and will also be spending time at Charles Sturt University.

Since 1981 Dr Limberg has been working at the Swedish School of Library and Information Science, University of Borås. With a record of successful research funding totalling over AUD\$3,000,000 for multiple projects focusing on information literacy in educational settings, Dr Limberg specialises in the application of interpretive and qualitative research methods to these fields. She also chairs the International Information Literacies Research Network which has a strong European and Australian membership.

Some recent publications include:

- Francke, H., Sundin, O. & Limberg, L. (forthcoming). Debating credibility: The shaping of information literacies in upper secondary schools. *Journal of Documentation*.
- Limberg, L., & Alexandersson, M. (2010). Learning and Information Seeking. In M. Bates & M. N. Maack (Eds.).

Encyclopedia of Library and Information Sciences. 3rd Edition. (pp. 3252-3263). New York: Taylor and Francis Group.

- Limberg, L., Alexandersson, M., Lantz-Andersson, A. & Folkesson, L. (2008). What matters? Shaping meaningful learning through teaching information literacy. *Libri*, 58, (2), 82-91.
- Lundh, A. & Limberg, L. (2008). The role of the pedagogue in pupils' construction of information literacy. *Libri*, 58 (2), 92-101.

Dr Limberg's current work is focussed on the digital environment in school and professional settings and QUT hope this visit will strengthen already existing contacts and collaboration between our research groups in Australia and Sweden. Most importantly of course, we hope she will find time to enjoy Australian culture, climate and hospitality.

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