

# The last word

## Jae Rolt, Australia's Favourite Librarian

### WHY DO YOU LOVE WORKING IN A LIBRARY?

Being a teacher librarian means I get to teach every single child in my school, from Kindergarten to Year 6, every week. I love helping them to find that perfect book or series and watching the delight on their faces when they tell me about their favourite books.

### WHAT MAKES YOUR LIBRARY COMMUNITY SPECIAL?

I work with an amazing group of teachers / school staff who are passionate about quality education and who use the library resources and space daily. The parents of our students value the library and enthusiastically show their support every year with our Book Week / Book Fair where we sell hundreds of books and almost all of the students and staff come dressed to the theme.

### WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT BEING ONE OF OUR WINNERS?

I was thrilled just to be nominated for Australia's Favourite Librarian and as the first few votes trickled in I was quite excited. Some voters started leaving comments about what a great job they thought I did and I was quite humbled by that. Then an ex-student wrote how I had taught him to love literature, how to lose himself in a great book, and how lessons learned from me would stay with him for life. That comment alone left me speechless.

To be announced as winner of New South Wales was completely unexpected, but to then be announced as overall winner, as Australia's Favourite Librarian, absolutely overwhelmed me. I have a brilliant group of family and friends and that extends to my current and past students and their families. To know that I have had a positive impact on so many lives is an amazing feeling and this is something I will cherish for the rest of my life.

### WHAT MADE YOU DECIDE TO PURSUE A CAREER IN LIS?

It was a natural progression from my life as a child, having my own books shelved in alphabetical order and later putting them into a database so my friends could borrow them. It wasn't until I was older that I realised not everyone saw this as the normal thing to do. Becoming a teacher librarian seemed like the perfect way to combine my two passions of teaching and books.

### IF YOU WEREN'T IN LIS, WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

I cannot imagine any other career that I would enjoy as much or that would give me as much satisfaction. If I hadn't become a teacher librarian, I would be a classroom teacher.

### WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE GREATEST CHALLENGES FACING THE LIS TODAY?

Technology – so many people think they have all the answers because they have a computer with a search engine. But the search engine can give you many false answers. I think our greatest challenge is teaching people how to find exactly what they are looking for in such a technological society.

### WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO ANYONE CONSIDERING A CAREER IN LIS?

DO IT ! Whether you are thinking about becoming a community librarian or a teacher librarian, if it is something you are considering, then it is obviously something you think you would enjoy. I find that working with children and helping to foster in them a love of reading and literature is so fulfilling. Many parents often borrow books from my school library as well. You are never too young or old to enjoy a good book.

### WHAT'S YOUR BEST MEMORY OF WORKING IN LIBRARIES?

Dressing up as "The Cat in the Hat" for Book Week celebrations and having one of my students, who is autistic, not realising it was me and wanting to stay with me all day and have his photo taken with me. It was just lovely.

### AS ALIA'S FIRST AUSTRALIA'S FAVOURITE LIBRARIAN, WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SAY TO AUSTRALIA'S LIBRARIANS?

Keep doing the amazing job you are doing and enjoy every moment of sharing the vast knowledge of this world with children and adults. Imparting a love of reading to someone is a gift they will have for life.

Libraries play such an important part in our society. They are a centre for lifelong learning and sometimes one of the first places where a child will interact with a book. Not everyone can afford to buy books or have the space to store all of their favourites. Libraries not only offer the books, but also a place to read and companionship with like-minded people.

### WHAT DOES YOUR SUPER-LIBRARIAN COSTUME LOOK LIKE?

I love costumes, so my super-librarian costume would have to incorporate elements from all of my favourite books. I would have long orange 'Anne of Green Gables' braids, a 'Cat in the Hat' hat, Harry Potter's wand, a red hooded cloak, Dorothy's red slippers and, of course, Hermione's bag with the undetectable extension charm so that I could carry all of my favourite books with me all of the time.

