



Creative Spaces

MICHELLE COLLINS reports on Makerspaces in public libraries and how strategic documents can support your creative vision.

Creative communities congregating in libraries is a growing reality in Australia as libraries embrace the Maker-movement culture. Horsham Library has had a Maker's Gallery and workshop in the Mibus Centre above their building since the 1970s, while the City of Melbourne's newly opened Kathleen Syme Library and Community Centre was refurbished with creative communities in mind.

If you're considering setting up such a centre – by investing in 3D printers, setting up a Lego club or some other activity – it is helpful to refer to existing strategic documents to show you how to go about it.

'Victorian Public Libraries 2030 Strategic Framework' makes a very strong case for community involvement through creativity. Its focus on 'creativity, collaboration, brain health, dynamic learning and community connection' points directly towards libraries becoming spaces not just of individual information consumption, but collaborative community creation (PLVN, State Library of Victoria, 2013, p.5). A fine example of this community activity was the overwhelming response from public libraries to the call for crocheted poppies to commemorate World War I.

In other cases teenagers are designing their own video games (Horsham Library), parents and children are building pinball machines and disadvantaged youth are learning how to build computers from scratch from recycled materials (The Edge, State Library of Queensland).

On a simpler scale, origami clubs and Lego clubs give families the sense that the library space is their own, which meets social inclusion criteria as well as furnishing a new generation with tactile, literacy, problem-solving and social skills.

Maker-culture embraces a 'reduce, reuse, recycle' mentality, consistent with every local council's environmental and sustainability goals that encourage the community to come together to create, not just consume.

There's no end to the benefits for the community and your colleagues who come along for the ride when you jump on board the Maker-movement bandwagon!



Library at the Dock, Poppy Crafting Group ANZAC commemoration display, Docklands, City of Melbourne