

WHAT MAKES A GREAT LIBRARY SERVICE?

A library that **CHANGES LIVES**

The State Library of Queensland is a refuge from the hubbub of busy Brisbane streets, where people can improve their language skills, revamp their résumé, study and do much more, as **FIONA DIXON** reports.

What makes State Library of Queensland's (SLQ) service so amazing? Ask anyone who works here and you're sure to get enthusiastic responses about our wonderful collections, wide variety of services and extensive array of programs for Queenslanders from all walks of life. Each librarian will have different views on the most useful or exciting library offerings and our favourite spaces in which to study, work, create or relax. But to find out what really makes SLQ special, we need to find out what our regular visitors love about us and what keeps them coming back.

Jaya first came to SLQ early this year after immigrating to Australia. Armed with just a positive attitude and determination to find a suitable job, he discovered that we offered free computer and internet access, books to borrow and friendly staff to help with membership and resources. Visiting daily for several weeks, Jaya made the most of practical resources to build his résumé and prepare job applications.

'SLQ is my favourite spot and has kept me focused and motivated,' said Jaya, who was delighted when his hard work paid off and he was offered a position. 'State Library of Queensland is part of my success in finding my first position in Australia.'

Youn Woo, a practitioner of Chinese medicine, arrived from South Korea three years ago. As he spoke little English, his friends suggested SLQ as somewhere to study for his language exams. Youn Woo said that he loves coming to SLQ for study and pleasure, and can focus on extending his knowledge away from distractions at home. He enjoys the calm, clean spaces where he can use wi-fi, refill his water bottle, and relax in a comfortable temperature. He said, 'Overall the library is essential for me!'

Another visitor, Aaron, told us that SLQ provides a safe, relaxing place to connect with family and plan the future. Aaron was retrenched after a workplace restructure, and he became homeless. Curiosity first brought him to SLQ, where he discovered that free membership provided



Youn Woo



Cheryl Sullivan

access to the internet, wi-fi and other resources to help him look for work. He likes the spacious and welcoming areas where he feels secure and comfortable. Aaron managed to find a home and is now working towards starting a business.

A note left by another visitor expressed thanks for 'your heartfelt gift of helping a struggling "aged" student in distress. You touched my heart.' And Cheryl, a budding writer, found that her creativity blossomed in the library, in quiet peaceful surroundings away from a noisy home. She said: 'The library has made a difference in my life ... To me it's a very magical place.'

While SLQ collects and preserves Queensland's history, provides comprehensive reference and research services, and engages people of all ages in our diverse programs, it is only when we listen to our visitors that we truly learn how our library makes a difference to people. By providing a welcoming, safe and comfortable environment, with supportive and friendly assistance to access and use resources, we empower people to dramatically improve their lives. 🌟

FIONA DIXON

Librarian

State Library of Queensland

fiona.dixon@slq.qld.gov.au