

This was one of the recommendations around promotion and social media from their report that has been adopted, and our engagement in these channels is increasing. There is such a wealth of information in their final report, and we are still evaluating which recommendations could be adopted straightaway and which ones should be added to our operational planning for next year.

The library is excited to be repeating the experience, and the benefits far outweigh the logistical burden. Next time a new group of students will focus on a different

area, such as digital literacy or another of our special collections. Discussions are currently underway as to the exact nature of the practicum, but it promises to open up a range of possibilities. ✨

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DAWN MCLOUGHLIN

Senior Librarian | Reference & Information Services  
Murdoch University Library  
Perth WA  
dawn.mcloughlin@murdoch.edu.au

## Fantastic library events and how to create them

**Y**ou don't have to be supernaturally gifted to conjure up a magical library event on a shoestring budget, as JOHN LOMBARD and JESSICA BEGLEY report.

This year Libraries ACT wanted to mark the 20th anniversary of the publication of the first Harry Potter book with a fantastic event – turning a library branch into Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, complete with Quidditch lessons, potions class, fortune-telling, a Sorting Hat, an O.W.L. exam, a snitch hunt and wand-making. Our challenge was to do all that on a budget of \$200.

Making this event magical would require careful planning and a smart use of resources. The team was guided by the continuous improvement lessons of previous large events, including a prior Harry Potter night. These were our guiding principles:

- Don't reinvent the wheel. Harry Potter events from other libraries were an important source of inspiration. We were also able to re-use materials from past Harry Potter events, such as an Azkaban 'Wanted' poster and brick wall for Diagon Alley.
- Keep it low-tech, keep it inexpensive. As tempting as it was to have moving portraits on iPads, we got great results from the simple and imaginative – as anyone who stumbled across the transparency of Moaning Myrtle taped to a bathroom mirror discovered.
- Get all staff involved. Staff helped with everything from sign-making to teaching Quidditch, and they also provided their own amazing Harry Potter costumes on the night.



Hogwarts teacher assemble! From left: Caroline Tunstall, Jan Thurling, Jessica Begley, Tessa Barker, John Lombard, Samantha Edmonds and Jaz Beer.

Local children make reading magical at their local library.

Some ideas did not mesh with our guidelines and needed to be cut. For example, the time-consuming creation of personalised Hogwarts acceptance letters for each participant. Instead, the simple ideas often proved the most effective. A photo booth using laminated printables proved a cheap and popular passive activity. A decorated library trolley made a simple and effective Hogwarts Express. Staff dressed in costumes also provided children with moments of wonder, as Fawkes and Professor Snape learned when they fielded tricky questions from their knowledgeable young fans.

The event, which 150 parents and children attended, was a success, and there was a strong presence on social media. But the greatest success of the night was proving that with the right approach, the library could make reading magical for the devoted fans of the Boy Who Lived. ✨

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JOHN LOMBARD AND JESSICA BEGLEY

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