

# Changing Library Types: The journey of joint-use to public library

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## ABSTRACT


In 2007, a new rural public library became a pioneer in Australia's library profession. The library was the result of one of the few school community libraries, of which there are more than 45 in South Australia (SA), to disband, with the local council deciding to develop a sole public library service. The project timeframe was less than six months; and involved closing the school community library and creating a new public library, in a state heritage listed building. The decision to change the library's service delivery model was due to a number of factors: accessibility and OHSW issues for library staff and visitors at the school site, regional population growth and increased demand for library programs within the council area.

This was a groundbreaking development and significant to the public library sector in assessing the success of a relatively rare process. These exciting changes posed many challenges, as there was minimal information available in SA or interstate about this type of endeavour.

This paper discusses the model of change for the creation of the new council run public library, including the disbandment of the joint use library and focuses on the progression of library services and the resulting benefits and impact to the community. The paper also considers the additional opportunities generated during the change process that were not previously possible for the library, and the effect the new model had in developing the skills of library/council staff. The paper concludes with highlights of the library's successes and experiences that have occurred in the library's first year of operation.

## BACKGROUND

Since 1983, the District Council of Mallala (DCM) had provided library services in a joint-use arrangement from the Two Wells Primary School (TWPS) site, which had been beneficial to both organisations during this time. The District Council of Mallala had also supported (and continues to do so) two branch libraries at Mallala and Windsor, with resources supplied from the Two Wells Community Library. In December 2006 the Two Wells Community Library closed, and the period of joint-use library services ended for the District Council of Mallala. A new era of library services began in February 2007 at the new Two Wells Public Library.

Two Wells is 42 kilometres from Adelaide (about 35 minutes drive), and 24 kilometres from Gawler, within the District Council of Mallala. The council area is located in the Outer Metropolitan Segment of Adelaide, and covers an area 926km<sup>2</sup>, which includes the Gawler River flood plain, an important primary producing area. The district is unique due to its close proximity to Adelaide and is mainly concerned with cereal production and open range stock grazing, (however horse, animal keeping and rural living activities have become important in recent years, particularly in the Lewiston area). <sup>1</sup>

The two main service centres in the district are Two Wells, pop 717 (ABS 2006) <sup>2</sup> and Mallala pop 737 (ABS 2006). <sup>3</sup> Along with Lewiston pop 2478 (ABS 2006) <sup>4</sup> they form the main urban areas in the district. Both Two Wells and Mallala have a distinct country township character. The council region's close proximity to Gawler, the Barossa Valley and the northern suburbs of Adelaide make the District Council of Mallala an attractive and affordable area to reside in, whilst providing a country lifestyle within a reasonable commuter distance to Adelaide.

Over recent years, the council area's demographics have changed and will continue to do so, especially in townships, such as Lewiston, which has many isolated families and elderly community members. The council area experiences very poor access to public transport services, which has resulted in numerous challenges in providing retail and community services, particularly in Two Wells. <sup>1</sup>

### **THE TWO WELLS COMMUNITY LIBRARY**

In early 2006, in response to growing demand for library services, the council staff component for the Two Wells Community Library was increased. Council appointed two additional staff members, including a professionally qualified full-time Library Manager. The Education Department staffing component of a full-time Teacher Librarian and part time equivalent School Services Officer (SSO) remained unaltered. The revised staffing structure was part of commencing a new joint use library agreement in January 2006 that was negotiated previously during 2004 and 2005. At the same time a variety of staff changes occurred within the primary school, including the appointment of a new principal.

The Two Wells Community Library was the first of few South Australian joint-use libraries to operate within a primary school, and for this reason opened in 1983 as a pilot site. The School Community Libraries Committee (formally a committee of the SA Education Department) approved establishing the Two Wells Community Library after a direct approach to the Minister of Education in 1979 for a pilot service to be carried out in a primary school. <sup>5</sup> <sup>6</sup> The joint-use library was established despite the fact that the population of the area in which the Two Wells Primary School students came from was too large, and therefore did not meet the criteria of the committee's 1982 guidelines (which defined the eligibility for small rural communities). <sup>5</sup> Although the guidelines did provide exceptions to the eligibility criteria (including population limits if a joint use library was the best library service for the area), this exemption was not explored due to the direct approach made to the Minister of Education in 1979. <sup>5</sup> <sup>6</sup> However it is believed that the pilot was not monitored or assessed in the library's first years of being open, which meant an opportunity was lost to fully assess the model's strengths and weaknesses.

Due to the numerous new staff from council and Two Wells Primary School, the library manager and principal immediately recognised that a briefing on the situation for relevant council and school stakeholders was necessary, especially as the nature of joint use libraries (and public libraries) was unfamiliar to some staff. A staff member from the State Library of South Australia, Public Library Services with relevant experience and knowledge of the Two Wells situation was invited to assist with this process.

It soon became apparent there were a variety of issues that would need to be considered and rectified by the relevant stakeholders to effectively implement the new joint use agreement in 2007. Issues included the agreement's staffing and funding formula, provision of funding to address the library's OH&S problems, which were a priority as

they impacted on staff and library members. Also, of concern was the lack of effective communication and the sharing of information between the two organisations.

The community supported the new joint-use library and the facility was well used. However, there were a number of less than ideal factors related to the site. The library was situated in the middle of the school grounds and was not easy to find, therefore accessibility was difficult, and there was limited car parking. Like most joint-use libraries, the library's board of management, which included community, council and school representatives, oversaw the library. One important role of the new Library Manager's role was to establish a new library management committee (the previous library board disbanded in 2005 due to the commencement of the proposed new agreement) and be the committee's Executive Officer. The teacher librarian and library manager in this forum had no voting privileges. ☹<sup>5</sup> The new joint-use library agreement was to begin operation in January 2007.

Unfortunately, the community library facility was limited in the services it provided and many key programs were compromised for a range of reasons. Services such as story telling and associated activities were problematic to implement due to lack of space and school commitments during the day. Provision of education programs in the use of online resources was difficult, partly because the library did not have an appropriate training area. Establishing new services and participating in statewide initiatives such as The Little Big Book Club (TLBBC) was complex, due to the nature of the community library, especially in relation to staffing arrangements between school and council library staff. In particular, implementing TLBBC rhyme sessions was hard, due to the difficulty to secure a regular booking for space in the library or school that had adequate pram access and was comfortable to parents and babies. Also, the community library had little space that could be used for displaying relevant promotional materials and library resources. The compromised position of providing these services outside the library environment was less than ideal. Reader advisory services were problematic due to the lack of space for people to hold relevant conversations comfortably since the library was often noisy, and some reference services to community members were challenging to provide as collections and computers were often inaccessible during school teaching times.

A major issue that impeded delivery of library services at the Two Wells Community Library was that the community library and school were not on a street front location. The library was located in the middle of the school grounds in an isolated building, and some distance from the car park, which was counter to good design principles for a joint use community library. ☹<sup>7</sup> There was a major car-parking issue, with lack of space for library visitors, especially during times when parents were collecting children. This inevitably had an effect on community usage of the library as well as staff access to the workplace. Many library members and school parents were concerned and frustrated about the lack of car parking at the school, and community library. During 2004 – 2005, and in early 2006 substantial criticism was expressed to library and school staff and elected members of council. The library manager and school principal(s) also received written correspondence regarding this issue. No school owned land was available to improve the car parking area. In addition the community library building itself was not able to be easily extended and was extremely cramped for space in both staff and collection areas. This posed problems in relation to employee satisfaction and their ability to perform tasks effectively and safely. Further, the building offered inadequate space for viewing the library collections and to disabled patrons and parents with prams, and there were limited facilities available that impacted on the provision of reference and local history services, and adult and children's programs provided at the school site.

Other issues faced at the Two Wells Community Library included IT access problems for library staff and members and staff working in isolation (due to the location of the library in the middle of the school grounds and ‘quieter’ periods during the school holidays), as well as differing OH&S requirements for school and local government employees. The District Council of Mallala had a firm commitment to ensure that new employees were working in a safe workplace. These factors, combined with the low statistics on usage, as compared to other joint use libraries in regional South Australia (statistical records were inaccurate and could not confirm when usage of the library had decreased or if it had not risen appropriately), and the difficulties in accessing the library facility within the school site, indicated that both members and staff were frustrated with the problems surrounding access to the library.

Further investigation into the conditions of the ‘new’ joint use agreement and reviewing past usage statistics continued during May and June 2006 by the library manager and was supported by the school principal and council management. During this time, and in conjunction with recording a library usage statistic snapshot, council staff surveyed and interviewed a percentage of community members within the council district. The survey results revealed that the general community was unaware that there was a public library service provided by council at the primary school. Some residents within the community did know members of the public could use the library at the school site and of these, a significant proportion indicated that they chose not use the facility, as they disliked visiting the school campus to access a library service. This was partly due to car parking issues at the school site, but many comments also indicated that some library members did not feel comfortable walking through the school grounds to the library, and found the library resources hard to access during school hours. The school community was keen to see that council increase services and funding to the library, in particular for resources and information technology facilities and the school campus parent club organised a petition to this effect. During the first term of 2006, both the new library manager and school principal received comments and suggestions about increasing library programs, especially for children, such as story telling.

The feedback and correspondence which had been received about the community library and its access, along with details from the OHS review by council and the Department of Education was reviewed by council management in early June 2006. It became obvious that it was quite timely to re-evaluate council’s decision to sign the new joint use library agreement and to consider options for a new library service model, regional expansion and the creation of a ‘community hub’ within Two Wells.

The ‘new’ joint use agreement that was to be formally signed in early 2007 was to be for a three-year term, with twelve months notice should any party wish to terminate the agreement, and its terms were negotiated during 2004 - 2005. One consideration of council was that if the agreement was signed and council wished to terminate the agreement, any funding council spent on infrastructure of the community library would not be refunded as the library facility was to be retained by the Department of Education.

Research also indicated that entering into a joint-use library arrangement should be a decision, which is well investigated and has the full support of both parties. ☺<sup>5</sup> The community usage rates and number of registered community borrowers of the Two Wells Community Library indicated substantial under-utilisation. Council management believed that the library service could be better utilised by the community within the District Council of Mallala and in time become a valuable council service, especially if it

was located in an accessible place with relevant and attractive facilities. This belief was evidenced by feedback and suggestions from community members which council had received to date to improve facilities at the community library to enable these services to occur.

In June 2006 the library manager prepared a position statement for council about the 'new', but un-signed joint use library agreement, which highlighted the feedback, received from the Two Wells community. In July 2006 it was recommended by the Community Services Manager that Council evaluate the advantages and disadvantages in signing the proposed new library agreement and consider the positive effects that would occur if a new model of library services were introduced in Two Wells. Key considerations included increased community use and participation in library services centred on customer-identified needs and strengthening the community's engagement with this important council service.

In July 2006 Council decided not to sign the 'new' joint use library agreement, instead they chose to relocate the library service in 2007 and to establish a sole public library in Two Wells, housed in the Two Wells Institute. The fact that the 'new' joint use library agreement had not yet been signed was pivotal in this decision making process, leading to the community library's disbandment and establishment of an independent public library service in a strict timeframe.

The Two Wells Institute is a council owned heritage building, built in 1877 and is located in the main street of Two Wells. The staff and stakeholders in the community library and staff were notified of this important decision first, which was unexpected and a surprise to many. This was a deliberate decision that begun the process of change for library staff and members of the community. The exciting news of the new library was made public soon after, and its release was planned carefully to coincide with the beginning of term 3, and included the writing of a media release and its distribution to local media. Overall the reaction to the news was very positive and supportive from the majority of library members and school parents. There was excellent coverage in local newspapers and substantial interest from the SA library sector. Library members did express some concern about the short time frame of the relocation of library services and many unsolicited offers of assistance (volunteers) and cardboard boxes were received.

#### **THE JOURNEY BEGINS: A NEW MODEL FOR CHANGE**

In August 2006, the committed team of library staff and volunteers, led by the library manager and supported by key council staff began working towards a vision. The vision was: *to provide a vibrant public library environment in which visitors would feel welcome and comfortable using a variety of services, whilst preserving and highlighting the beautiful features of the Two Wells Institute.* This vision took time to shape and is still evolving. Simultaneously the community library continued supplying a library service to the public, school staff and students at the school, which included providing monthly book stock to the branch libraries at Mallala and Windsor.

#### **CHANGE TAKES SHAPE**

The exciting developments posed many challenges; several were unique to disbanding the joint-use Community library and creating a new public library service. Due to the quick decision making process, the project timeframe was less than six months. At the beginning of the project (July 2006), no published literature on this process was available, this posed a challenge and signified the need to document this journey of change.

A variety of tasks were identified during the project's planning stage, which included:

- Designing and arranging the fit-out of the state heritage listed Two Wells Institute for library purposes within heritage guidelines
- Preparing and assessing resources for relocation, including dividing the library's joint collections
- Organising an inventory and valuation register of jointly purchased assets and arranging their division and retention
- Once retention of joint assets have been confirmed, list retained furniture, shelving and equipment and development of a list of items required and request and source donations
- Selection of a new library management system
- Arrangements for the physical move of the library collections

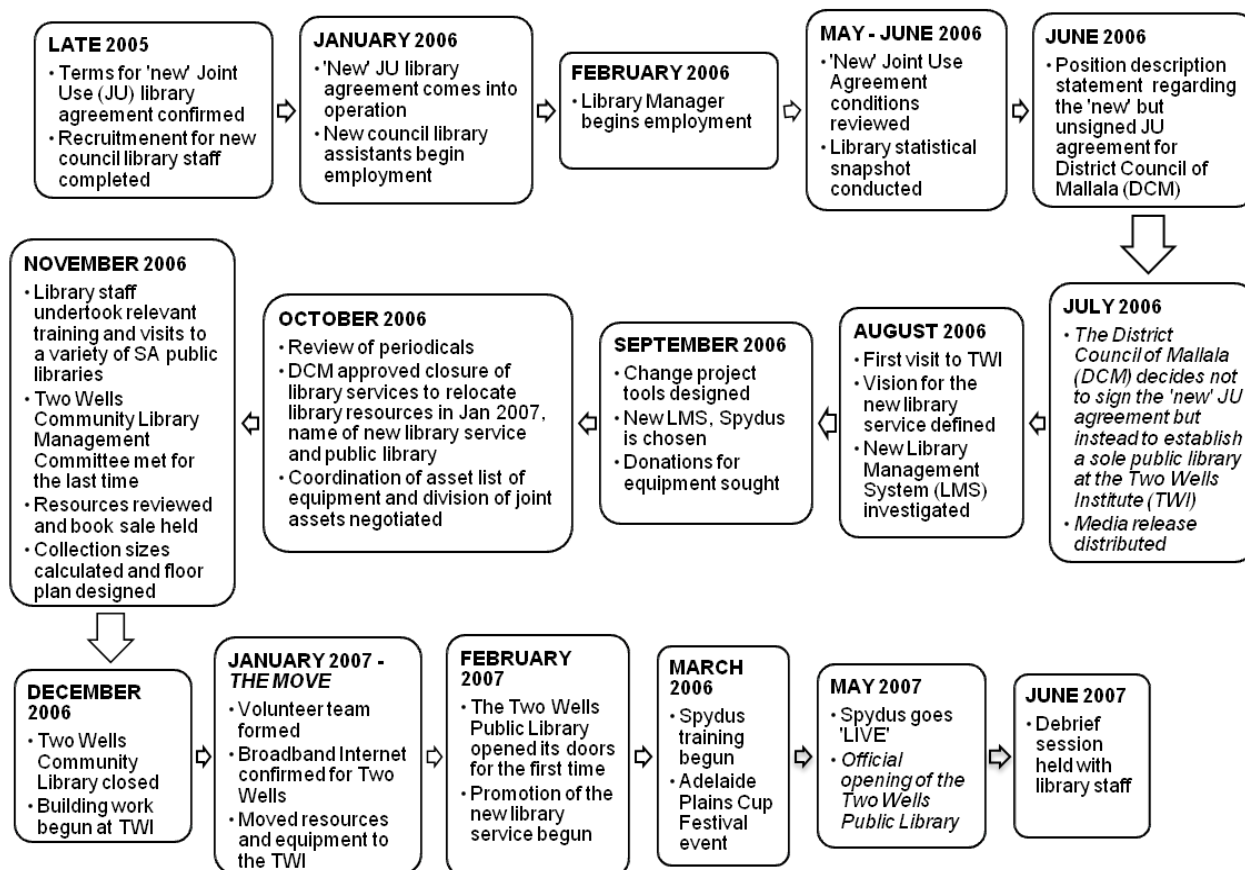
Council staff were excited about the change in library type and both school and council library staff recognised the benefits that both libraries would receive in 2007 (especially relating to larger facilities). It was generally recognised that a great deal of work lay ahead (particularly for the library manager), and that the process would be stressful but exciting and worthwhile. All recognised that there would be a variety of people who would be affected by the change in library type they were grouped as:

- Community library staff
- School staff
- Library members (including school children and parents)
- Council staff

The project team overcame numerous budgetary challenges, especially those relating to increased shelving and furniture needs, all of which were integral to the new library design. The budget for the new library had to include purchasing of a new Library Management System (50% project budget), IT and communication equipment (staff computers and phone system were an obvious necessity), relocation costs (trailer hire and staff costs), building improvements to the institute (new door and guttering) and electrical and cabling requirements, library shelving and furniture. The budget was tight and could not include any consultants to assist in the change process and design of the new library or new shelving.

It was agreed that a priority for library staff would be proactive customer service, which focussed on the positive benefits that the move would provide to both the school and new public library, and communication of arrangements (such as the closure of the library to allow the move to occur). It was important for all library staff to be visible to the local community. This decision was also implemented by all council customer service sites, and proved to be beneficial both prior and after the move to the institute, which was proven in the donation of 100's of card board boxes, improved profile of the library and the District Council of Mallala and numerous positive comments made about towards the new library.

## TIME LINE



Council library staff made their first visit to the institute in August 2006, which was an interesting process to discover staff reactions and confirm measurements of the institute. The visit enabled the library manager to confirm what the most important renovation work would include, such as electrical tasks, painting and flooring). Photos were taken during this visit (and would continue on subsequent visits), as it was recognised that they would provide a good record of what had been achieved once the library had opened.

In September 2006, the development of a variety of tools to manage the change project (including templates and comprehensive lists) took place and a time line was devised. Council library staff meetings began to be held and they continued to be a priority throughout implementing the change. At the first council staff meeting, the team brainstormed comprehensive lists that detailed tasks relating to the move and items necessary for the new library, these lists were reviewed regularly at informal meetings and conversations between library staff. Every potential item/task was included in these lists, which proved to be extremely helpful, and the same process was used for the planning of the official opening of the library.

In the last months of 2006, council approved:

- The library closure for December and January (to enable the move to the institute to occur),
- Named the new library service and new public library
- Library opening hours (once library members had been surveyed about their preferences for library opening hours - including preferred closure day and late night opening day)

Throughout this time, regular visits were made to the institute, allowing staff to become familiar with the building and their upcoming 'new' workplace and feedback was sourced about improvements to the library's periodicals. Also, the Library Management Committee met for the last time, and the library manager discussed the upcoming change with the school's governing body. In November 2006, library staff had the opportunity to tour a variety of libraries and attended training in adult programs. The introduction of broadband Internet services to Two Wells by January 2007 was confirmed – it's timing perfect! Building work begun at the institute in December 2006.

In February 2007 implementation of the new Library Management System (LMS), Spydus began, and a May 2007 'go live' date was confirmed. It was also decided to have the official opening of the library in Library and Information Week in late May. All agreed that this time frame was adequate and that this important event would be a celebration of the new library and a chance to recognise the hard work in its establishment. A project debrief session was scheduled (and held) in June 2007. Library staff continued to meet throughout 2007 and 2008.

Focussing on the positive benefits of the new library to staff and library members was a key element to implementing the change process, which gained the support and enthusiasm of the local community, library and council staff.

## **CHALLENGES**

The design of the new library facility and fit out was limited by three main factors.

1. The heritage nature of the building
2. The agreement to honour bookings for the Institute until mid December 2007 (which gave a short time frame for completing the library fit out prior to resources being moved into the facility), combined with the Christmas and holiday closures that affect many businesses)
3. A limited budget

### **Designing a library space within a heritage building**

The Two Wells Institute consists of a main hall area, a stage and two front rooms (one a kitchen). Due to the height of the stage, some barriers were faced in regards to using and accessing this space. At one stage a ramp to provide access to the stage was under consideration, but did not eventuate as the ramp length had to be longer than the actual hall area! Meetings with the heritage department, IT Service staff from Public Library Services, and library staff undertaking site visits to other public libraries was worthwhile. The need for additional shelving, furniture and equipment was of great importance, especially as there were budget limitations in funding new shelving. Therefore a request to the SA library sector for donations of shelving was made, resulting in a variety of items being received, including many items from TAFESA libraries, all of which were greatly appreciated.

The most difficult task was designing the floor plan of the new library in the main hall of the Two Wells Institute, particularly as the size of collections was hard to determine and the circulation desk had not been confirmed. Many resources were contained within a shared collection and a percentage of resources were on loan. A timetable to review, assess and separate the school and council owned stock was set. Fortunately, the physical differences of barcodes on the school and council owned resources helped to distinguish the two. The joint collections affected were the children's and adult non-fiction, and children's fiction. The process was at times hard to complete during school opening hours. The council owned resources that

would be moved to the new library were shelved separately from the school owned resources, enabling library users to access and borrow resources until the community library closed. Additionally, this also provided the opportunity to calculate shelving needs, which assisted in the design of the new library floor plan. By the end of 2006, all library collections that contained council owned resources had been reviewed and assessed. Resources that were debited from the collection were disposed of at a book sale and to charity.

#### **Sourcing necessary equipment and furniture**

From the onset of the project, and particularly after the visits to the institute it was determined that the most important piece of equipment/furniture that needed to be acquired was the sourcing of a circulation desk. Luckily colleagues at Public Library Services (State Library of SA) assisted by alerting the library manager to library sites that were renovating their libraries and may not need their 'desk' and one was sourced at no cost (excluding transport).

To overcome the project's small budget the library manager began to seek assistance to formulate the new library's design from colleagues who had been involved in renovating or building a new library. Colleagues were generous with their time and provided useful feedback and advice regarding their experiences. In particular the information received from libraries within a heritage building was very useful. A visit by staff from PLS to the institute was also helpful.

As the community library was disbanding, it became apparent that an inventory of the jointly owned equipment (including shelving) and furniture was necessary and would assist in a fair and equitable division of property. This inventory also included items that were owned solely by each organisation. Using council purchasing records, and researching current retail prices, an accurate inventory of items was written, and values (less depreciation) were allocated to each item. The total cost of the jointly purchased items was of most interest, as decisions were required to be made about whether the Two Wells Primary School or the District Council of Mallala retained these items, and what the other organization received if they did not retain the item. Council and school management made these decisions in late 2006, with documentation completing these transactions finalised in early 2007.

#### **Library Management System Selection**

The selection of a new Library Management System (LMS) was integral to the establishment of the new public library. Many products were considered by the council management, which included vendor presentations and quotations. Time pressures did impact the decision-making process slightly, as additional products could not be investigated and further vendor presentations could not occur. The preferred system was chosen in September 2006, with implementation planned to begin in late February 2007. Once the system had been chosen, in late 2006 visits to library sites using selected system were arranged.

The arrangements for the physical move to the new library were confirmed in late December 2006, along with relevant fit-out tasks. When the Two Wells Community Library closed for the final time, the Two Wells Institute had been carpeted; an additional wall had been built against the stage, the donated circulation desk installed and electrical work completed. Staff were organised to complete the move and the recruitment and orientation of volunteers to assist with relocation tasks was finalised.

## **THE VISION REALISED!**

On December 22<sup>nd</sup> 2006, the Two Wells Community library closed and on February 6<sup>th</sup> 2007 the new Two Wells Public Library began operating from the Two Wells Institute, incidentally where library services had first begun in the region over a century ago. The new library service opens for 28.5 hours each week, along with the existing Mallala and Windsor branches that operate for 4 and 1 hour(s) per week, respectively.

The opening hours at the new Two Wells Public Library were a slight reduction from the longer daily opening hours experienced at the school site (an advantage of the joint-use library arrangement), however the community had shorter opening hours during the school holidays at the community library, which does not happen at the new public library (a surprise to library patrons). Upon opening the new public library, verbal comments indicate that the library opening hours provide good access; in early 2007 numerous library members gave positive feedback that they believe the library opening hours are 'longer than what I expected' and 'very adequate'.

## **BETTER ACCESS FOR THE COMMUNITY**

The new public library is situated in the main shopping precinct of Two Wells and is adjacent to the historic 'Two Wells' (the town's namesake and tourist attraction). The layout of the library is designed to ensure that customers can easily locate resources and facilities/services. The library features the restored Reading Room, which houses the remaining resources from the original Institute library collection. The main library area permanently displays the war 'Roll of Honour' memorials and numerous wall hangings made by the local community, which provide a unique ambience to the library.

The District Council of Mallala Library Service celebrated Library and Information Week in 2007, with the official opening of the Two Wells Public Library on May 25<sup>th</sup> 2007. Wireless @ Your Library and the new library management system, Spydus, were also launched at this event. Approximately 80 guests from areas across the state and local community members attended. The opening was supported by local businesses and well publicised in local papers and newsletters, and also featured in ALIA's national magazine, *Incite*.

## **ENCOURAGING RESULTS ACHIEVED: SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS, INITIATIVES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

### **PROGRESSION OF SERVICES**

The library's new facilities and improved access have made way for the introduction of many new services and improved customer service. These include hosting regular sessions with local playgroups, space to supervise student exams (an invaluable service as lengthy travel arrangements to Adelaide and suburbs and their related costs have been reduced for students), and participation in the Tax Help program. Also, in conjunction with the Two Wells Family History Group, library staff can provide assistance to library visitors who seek to access relevant resources from their collection, such as local cemetery records. Recently this collection has been donated to the library service, due to the loan of the collection (to the library in 2007), it was discovered that the conservation of this collection was not assured.

## **LIBRARY COLLECTION**

The new library facility allowed all council owned resources to be viewed together for the first time. Initially library staff and members were surprised at how large the collection actually was once the separated resources had been unpacked. All library collections, such as the Music CD collection (which has attracted new members and increased loans), were visible and accessible, which was not the case at the joint-use library. In 2007 a conscious and deliberate effort was made to improve the overall quality and relevance of library resources, and to introduce new collections and resources to library members (such as hear-a-books). The relocation of the library also facilitated many enquiries about donating books to the library, and as a result the library collection have been supplemented, which has assisted in meeting the needs of increased library members and obviously assists the library's budget.

## **LIBRARY VOLUNTEERS**

One of the most significant developments is the establishment of volunteering within the District Council of Mallala Library Service. In late 2006 volunteers were recruited, and a team was formed in early 2007. The volunteers were an integral part of the relocation tasks and made a large contribution to the library's official opening in May 2007. Fourteen volunteers have contributed to the library service between October 2006 and March 2008 and provided numerous benefits to the library service. Volunteer duties varied and included packing and unpacking of books, laminating library borrower cards, and covering books. The main tasks conducted by volunteers in 2007 were related to technical services and collection development.

## **LIBRARY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

Implementation of the new library management system (LMS), Spydus, was an important part of the library's relocation and establishment. Spydus enables online access to the library catalogue and includes for the first time the distribution of library cards to all of our customers, which was well received (and did not occur at the community library due issues with class borrowing). The Two Wells Public Library, along with two other SA public libraries, is part of a regional consortium arrangement that provide access to Spydus and a shared catalogue of bibliographic data.

Spydus has provided a logical avenue to initiate partnerships with other SA libraries (including the special library sector) through the national Spydus Users Network group (SPUN), but in particular neighbouring libraries and the library sites within our regional consortium arrangement. These partnerships have occurred on a variety of levels and contributed to the professional development of library and council staff involved and facilitated the formation of networks nationally and internationally.

Spydus training began in March 2007, over a month after moving into the Two Wells Institute. When the library opened to the public, a semi-manual system of recording loans to our patrons was designed and included using Microsoft Excel, which was in use until June 2007. The first months of operation were difficult as there was no access to the catalogue of resources, and visiting the school site to check the catalogue was time-consuming and often not successful. Patrons and staff used this challenge of finding resources in the library to acquaint themselves with the new library layout and the process was also a good memory tester! During this time, the library also began the process of re-registering library users with the new LMS, which enabled patrons to use Spydus immediately from the date of going live (mid May 2007). In addition, due to the

nature of LMS implementation not all of the library's resources had a bibliographic record on Spydus (partly due to the difficulties in obtaining bibliographic data from the community library LMS).

### **ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES**

Since February, 2007 the Two Wells Public Library has been presented with many opportunities that were not previously possible, or able to be considered, whilst part of a joint-use library. The library has hosted successful author events, which have continued the library's relationship with local schools. The most recent event (in March 2008), actually took place in the library; this was the first time the library's multi-purpose space was used for an event, utilising the rolling shelving and providing an opportunity to learn about the capacity that this space was suited to. The new library service has participated in the Adelaide Plains Cup Festival in March 2007 and 2008.

The library has hosted visits from local and interstate library and council staff and the Reading Room has been used regularly as a venue for a variety of meetings. Two notable tours of the library were given to the South Australian Libraries Board (July 2007) and to international librarian (and American Librarian of the Year) Rivkah Sass (August 2007). Feedback from our visitors has been extremely positive and useful.

### **INCREASED PARTNERSHIPS**

During the past year the District Council of Mallala Library Service has contributed to the library profession in a number of ways, including supporting the library manager's involvement and initiative in professional organisations such as Public Libraries South Australia (PLSA), Spydus Users Network (SPUN), ALIA South Australia and South Australian Library Information Network (SALIN), which strengthens the professional development of library staff and raise the profile of council immeasurably. The implementation of Spydus has also enabled collaboration between relevant SA regional library services. More recently local government regional cooperation was formalised in late 2007, when the District Council of Mallala and Town of Gawler signed a Memorandum of Understanding to jointly access casual library staff. This has been a valuable learning experience for both councils, providing numerous benefits to both.

### **INCREASED USAGE**

The establishment of the new library has enabled council staff and elected members to increase their awareness of the library's role within local government. It has also resulted in a larger number of council staff using library resources and services. The introduction of Wireless @ Your Library, and Your Tutor has enhanced the electronic services available to library patrons and visitors to the community.

Reference enquiries and an increase in the usage of online resources have developed the skill set and knowledge base of library staff. The promotion of reference services has allowed customers to view the library as a source of information and knowledge. Library members are better aware that they can approach the library with an information query, with the expectation that a relevant answer will be provided to them in a timely and professional manner; to many library members this is a new discovery.

The statistics for 2007 indicate a significant improvement in library usage and show an increase in:

- Enquiries for council services
- Local and family history queries and access to these collections
- Internet usage
- Inter-library loan and reference requests

Furthermore, visitation on Saturday mornings has increased significantly, as has the number of library members using more than one library branch, as many have begun utilising services at the Two Wells Public Library in addition to the branch libraries.

After the library's official opening in May 2007 and due to the improved location an influx of new library members occurred in mid 2007. It is understood that many of the new library members were residents within the council area who had stopped using the joint-use library. Some of these 'returning' library members have mentioned to library staff that they had 'stopped using the library at the school' for a variety of reasons, which included car parking issues and disliking of going to the school and personal reasons. When prompted about what they had done since, feedback was that books were either bought or borrowed from public libraries in other council areas. Comments also indicated that these new library members were pleased that they do not have to travel outside of Two Wells and the council district to visit a sole public library.

Constructive verbal and written feedback about the library design and resources has been received from library visitors, which is both rewarding and useful for library staff to act upon. Visitors regularly give feedback to library staff about the resources within the library collections, this has been acted upon when necessary; in addition many patrons (including children) have questioned – 'who funds the library?' This has been a good opportunity to raise awareness of our council and state funding and local government relationship with public libraries.

## **FEEDBACK**

The positive comments that library staff have received about the services provided and the location of the new library has been overwhelming, and include remarks such as: "Looks great! Fantastic addition to the community!" and "Good to see the Institute being used. Love the new location!" However, it is the incidental feedback, which has been most rewarding to hear. Due to the size of the library, library staff are constantly receiving a variety of useful comments about the library service and collections.

## KEY OUTCOMES

To date it is believed that the key outcomes for the Two Wells Public Library are:

- The District Council of Mallala provides a safe and easily accessible public library facility that is having a major impact in the district, and especially enhancing the social fabric of the Two Wells community, whilst continuing to assist in improving literacy levels and encourage life long learning
- Development of quality library services to community members of Two Wells and residents of the District Council of Mallala
- Provision of an adequate and safe work place for library employees, resulting in a higher level of employee satisfaction and improved ability to perform tasks effectively and safely

These outcomes, combined with the achievements of the District Council of Mallala Library Service were attained within a small budget and a time frame of less than 12 months.

## STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

- List and document ALL tasks, despite how small they may seem
- Actively network and discuss arrangements and issues with your colleagues (especially those within your council), including library professionals outside your 'sector'! Don't be afraid to ask for assistance, as, often good results are achieved - in our situation we requested practical items, and the result was significant (more than half of our shelving requirements were donated to us). Communicate your needs to relevant colleagues and vendors
- Involve library and council staff in the change management process, including decision making processes
- Begin implementing a new LMS prior moving into a new library and ensure that it is operating as soon as possible and certainly before commencing services to the public
- Develop relationships with the appropriate government departments (and agencies) early on in the project and maintain communication with them. Network with relevant colleagues who have renovated and work within a heritage building is also very useful
- Develop a good relationship with the media; this will eventually result in great promotion of the opening festivities, and as in our experience, highlight the profile of council and understanding of local government and assist in promoting future events that the library holds
- Document your journey with photographs and ensure that you take photos regularly
- Recognise and acknowledge that the change process will affect library members and staff, and promote the expected positive benefits and focus on the end result.
- Undertake a building audit for OHS requirements. If possible, ensure that the new library building is reviewed to meet all OHS requirements and possible problems prior to opening the library
- Recognise that it will be a time of change and stress for library staff and patrons who are adjusting to new surroundings
- Review the change process at regular intervals
- Celebrate and acknowledge your achievements and success, and provide recognition to the people and organisations that assisted with the project

## **FUTURE DIRECTIONS AND FOCUS POINTS FOR TWO WELLS PUBLIC LIBRARY**

- Increase and improve marketing of the library service
- Review and stock take of the library's collections
- Development of the newly donated local and family history collection
- Continue to respond to our community's needs appropriately and innovatively
- Implementation of children's and adults programs
- Continuation of regional collaboration with relevant SA library services
- Development and review of library policies and procedures
- Celebration of the 130<sup>th</sup> Birthday of the Two Wells Institute (November 2008)

Overall, it is obvious the new library service and the Two Wells Public Library is having a significant impact on people within the council area and also to library staff. Moreover, the library's improvement and growth is expected to continue. This is a remarkable feat demonstrating a fulfilled project vision which library all staff are extremely proud of!

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## **PRESENTER BIOGRAPHY**

Kimberley Hargrave has worked in a variety of library sectors after graduating in 1999 with a BA, including joint-use, special/health, public and TAFE. She has held a variety of roles that have ranged from being a library shelver, children's librarian to her current position of Library Manager of the District Council of Mallala Library Service. Despite growing up in a city, she has lived and worked in regional areas for most of her career, including Peterborough, Broken Hill and Whyalla. Kimberley is an active ALIA member, and was the Web Coordinator for the 2<sup>nd</sup> New Librarians Symposium (2004), an ALIASA Committee member for the past four years and participated as a mentor in the ALIA Mentoring SA program during 2007/08. She is also a member of the SALIN executive Committee (2007/2008). Kimberley is a passionate advocate for working within and experiencing the regional libraries.