The national voice for 15 million Public Library Members

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Dear FOLA Members and Friends,

Fifteen years ago (which simultaneously sounds like a long time and the wink of an eye) the world was a very different place. My point is not to rehash how much technology has changed since then. We all know that mobile phones, wireless communications and social media have transformed our world - and not always for the better.

Rather, I want to highlight an important change in thinking that seems to have occurred across Australia in the last decade and a half. It seems to me (and this is an entirely unscientific opinion) that there is a growing consensus across councils of all shapes, sizes and demographics, that a great public library must sit at the heart of every community.

The New Generation of Australian Libraries

Back in the early 2000s, I recall the biggest and best investments in public libraries in Australia tended to be in large outer-suburban, metropolitan councils with large populations of non-English speaking residents. Whether it was Blacktown in Sydney, Wyndham in Melbourne, or Joondalup in Perth, the big, ambitious projects seemed to have this common thread.

At the other end of the spectrum, I would often hear from councils in the wealthiest suburbs that there was no need for better library facilities because residents could afford to buy plenty of books. And in rural and regional areas, there were often so many other competing priorities, libraries often got overlooked.

How the Australian public library landscape is changing. Whether you are in inner-city Sydney, where the Surry Hills, Double Bay and Green Square libraries are shining destinations, or regional Victoria where the Geelong Library and Heritage Centre is arguably the best public library in the nation, we are seeing some fabulous examples of great new public library spaces. And much of this is the result of citizens - and Friends groups - lobbying for the cause.

I came across a great article from a website called The Design Files which features some of the best recent examples of wonderful public libraries. Have a look at: https://thedesignfiles.net/2019/04/architecture-best-libraries-australia/

The photographs of these buildings are remarkable, and they underscore just how iconic many of our nation’s newest libraries are. The fact is that architecture firms increasingly see the design of libraries as opportunities to make statements and to showcase the best thinking and engineering in public space design.

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FOLA

Celebrating 25 Years 1994–2019

Friends of Libraries Australia (FOLA) will celebrate our 25th Anniversary on Thursday 5 December 2019, 5 pm at a function in the Institute Building, State Library of South Australia, North Terrace, Adelaide.

“The State Library of South Australia is home to Australia’s first Library Friends group, established in 1932.”

GUEST SPEAKER: MEM FOX

Acclaimed Australian Author

Celebrate with us, as we commemorate our achievements since establishment on the 5 December 1994, when FOLA was launched by our foundation patron, the Hon Justice Michael Kirby, AC, CMG at a function at the State Library of Victoria.

Further details of speakers and program for the evening will follow. Mark this date in your calendar now.

The State Library of South Australia is home to Australia’s first Library Friends group, established in 1932. FOLA is pleased to return to this location, thanks to Geoff Stempel, Director of the State Library of South Australia.
“Book Feasts are a new and wonderfully clever take on the age-old idea of author-reader engagement, with the library as the facilitating public space.”

Farewell, Christobel

Last, I was deeply saddened to read of the passing of South Australian author and long-time FOLA friend Christobel Mattingley. I recall hearing Christobel give a talk at a FOLA function in Adelaide several years ago, and then purchasing a selection of her books for my family to enjoy. I still think about her biography of Deny King — *King of the Wilderness* — as one of the most evocative stories I have ever read about the Tasmanian wilderness. You can read about Christobel’s life here: https://www.booksandpublishing.com.au/articles/2019/06/05/134349/rip-christobel-mattingley/

Christobel was a genuine Australian treasure, and a wonderful advocate for public libraries, as well.

Thank you for taking time to read this letter, and for being a Friend of libraries. Enjoy this issue and please share it with your family and friends.

Warmest wishes,
Jack Goodman
FOLA president
jgoodman@betterlibraries.org.au

“FOLA’s 25th anniversary is just around the corner, and we are looking forward to celebrating in style at the State Library of South Australia.”
Writers often talk about their muse when writing a novel, but sometimes the muse strikes in other ways. Book Feasts was the result of a moment of enthused conversation with my muse.

Last year, I created an initiative with America’s Every Library (a non-profit Political Action Committee chartered to work exclusively on local library ballot initiatives to protect public funding). As part of my USA book tour, I travelled from California to New York promoting Every Library’s ‘Stop the Summer Slide’ in reading campaign in the form of free children’s author panels across America. On the month-long road trip, I also collected new and used books to be distributed to those in need by Friends of Libraries New Orleans during the American Library Association annual conference. It was such a fun and successful campaign that when I returned to Australia, I wondered how I could make a difference for libraries in the country in which I lived.

I came up with the concept of Book Feasts in which the focus was to erase the line between local authors and book lovers while also supporting public libraries. Book Feasts would be like a book club, except you didn’t have to read the set book, and at least eight local authors would be there to mingle with. And given everyone was there ‘for the love of books’ I’d then share information about our public libraries, passing on news about budget cuts, closures, and more, in the hope of conjuring support against such actions.

Continued overleaf
I approached FOLA with the concept. The President, Jack Goodman, talked about creating ‘one voice’ through Book Feasts, such that if we needed to speak up for our public libraries, we’d have ready-made Book Feasts communities of booklovers across Australia. He also spoke of attracting different age groups to Book Feasts, from young mums upwards.

FOLA successfully contacted Sunshine Coast Libraries to discuss the concept and secure a venue for the free community Book Feasts. Now their events team put the events on their website and in their events calendar, and they also create posters and leaflets that are distributed through the libraries. The authors and I market the event through our social media, local community boards and bookshops.

To get Book Feasts up and running, I put out a call on Facebook to local authors. Authors of many varied genres responded and we discussed the bi-monthly concept and format. There are 17 authors in the Sunshine Coast chapter and they’re obligated to attend three Book Feasts out of the six annual events. Two or three authors per meeting are featured and ‘in conversation’ with each other about their books and writing in the ‘formal’ half hour slot at the start of the event. I act as the MC and pass on news or issues affecting libraries, information that’s supplied by FOLA.

I believe the concept works because the presence of multiple authors attracts booklovers to the event. Given that both authors and readers are library lovers, the idea of spending a couple of hours socialising over book talk at the local library is enticing to all parties. These attendees are then clearly open to supporting their libraries, both locally and nationally. Book Feasts can be run anywhere there are authors and booklovers who want to socialise at their local library. The emphasis is unique – it’s all about the love of reading and libraries and is not a commercial opportunity for authors, though book sales may be a happy side-effect.

To date, we’ve run four successful Book Feasts on the Sunshine Coast. The format includes collecting email addresses to notify people of the next Book Feasts event (or inform about a petition they might like to sign to stop a budget cut). After the formal half hour, the next 90 minutes are devoted to mingling and chatting (booklovers and authors and librarians) over wine and nibbles. Refreshments are sometimes organised by local Friends of Libraries groups, and sometimes BYO.

We’ve had a Saturday afternoon Women’s V Men’s Fiction with Cass Moriarty and Terence J. Quinn, a Saturday morning Kid’s Book Feasts in which T.M. Clark, Emma Middleton and Elaine...
“FOLA and I are looking to roll out Book Feasts across Australia”

Ouston entertained the kids, a ‘Memoir Evening’ with Shelley Davidow and Deborah Carlyon, and a Romance v Literary Fiction v YA Fiction chat with Sarah Williams, Annah Faulkner and me. Whether we mix up the genres or keep like with like, everyone has a lovely social and bookish event. I know it’s all worthwhile when people leave with faces lit up, enthused by books.

Book Feasts has expanded to a second chapter in the Moreton Bay region. Their first Book Feasts event will take place in September. Thanks to this easy concept and format, FOLA and I are looking to roll out Book Feasts across Australia by connecting authors with libraries and then attracting booklovers into the Book Feasts ‘one voice’ community.

To find out more about Book Feasts, you can visit our Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/groups/434236493649815/

Taryn Bashford is the author of young adult novels The Harper Effect and The Astrid Notes (July 2019). She currently lives on the Sunshine Coast with a family that includes teen children and a highly-strung dog. Taryn’s lived on four continents, meaning her job experience has been varied: an advertising sales rep, a ski chalet chef, a late night news reader and the CEO of an internet company, but writing and Australia are her true love. Taryn is currently working on her PhD in Creative Writing while tutoring undergraduates and writing more novels. When she’s not writing or teaching, she’s training for triathlons in the hope they will compensate for the fact she spends ten hours a day sat on her tushie.

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To find out more about Book Feasts, you can visit our Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/groups/434236493649815/
New Darling Square Library

to take flight in 2019

A modern library to support ideas and creativity

The new library in the heart of Darling Square (Sydney) will be housed on 2 floors of The Exchange building. Designed by Japanese Architects Kengo Kuma & Associates (who designed the stadium for the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games).

An Ideas Lab, a 200sqm makerspace workshop will be one of the features. The lab will host hands-on workshops for kids, teens and adults, from coding, robotics and virtual reality to school holiday maker sessions.

The Darling Square Library will be part of the City of Sydney’s library network of 9 branches.

From the City of Sydney website:

“Our brand new library in the heart of Darling Square is fast taking shape. Darling Square is one of Sydney’s newest neighbourhoods, transforming an area next to Haymarket and Darling Harbour. Set to open in spring 2019, the library will be housed on 2 floors of The Exchange building, overlooking a public plaza.

The spiral-like building wrapped in timber ribbons is designed by Japanese Architects Kengo Kuma & Associates. Well known for his signature timber cladding, Kengo Kuma designed the stadium for the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games and brings his vision to Australia for the first time.

More than 23 kilometres of sustainably sourced timber panels curve around the outside of the circular building. Creating a unique façade with a playful likeness to a birds nest, the handcrafted panels also filter natural light into the building.

Sydney Architects Bligh Voller Nield designed the modern interiors of the library to create welcoming and flexible spaces.”
Friends of South Carolina Libraries (USA)

“The Oconee Friends have installed another Little Free Library, this one at High Falls County Park. They maintain this LFL with books from the donations they receive every year.”

Friends of South Carolina Libraries (OSCL), a statewide organisation, created in the late 1980’s to help foster, create and support local Friends of the Library groups, and to provide networking opportunities for these groups to work together for the support of library services throughout the State of South Carolina. Two of the most active groups among the 36 members are:

Friends of Lexington Main Library
Currently support the Library by:
- Financially supporting the annual Summer Reading Program for children
- Sponsoring the annual Summer Reading Kick Off Party
- Sponsoring the annual Historic Heros
- Funding many of the Youth Services programs for children and teens
- Sponsoring the professional librarians participation in the South Carolina Library Association
- Staffing the Friends Corner Gift Shop
- Holding fund-raising events throughout the year

In the past the Friends have supported the Library by:
- Expanding the Youth Services Computer Area
- Commissioning and funding the “Circle of Friends” statue in front of the library
- Purchasing a photocopier and two microfilm reader/printers
- Establishing the Friends Corner Gift Shop
- Designing and installing the “Hand Print Tiles” in the library foyer

Friends of Oconee County Public Library
Little Free Libraries
The Oconee Friends have installed another Little Free Library, this one at High Falls County Park. They maintain this LFL with books from the donations they receive every year. The unit itself was created by students at West-Oak High School. Little Free Libraries are a nationwide phenomenon where users can take a book (or books), and are encouraged to leave a book, all free of charge. No library card is needed.

Oconee Friends of the Library Activities
- Book Sale: Annual event to raise funds for library programs
- Events: Various cultural events like concerts, author readings
- Become a Friend: Membership program
- Scholarships: Financial support for students

“The Oconee Friends of the Library have been promoting reading and literacy since 1981. We are a non-profit volunteer organisation that works to support the Oconee County Public Library by providing financial, volunteer and program support.”
Citizens Save Libraries

Power Guide

UNITED FOR LIBRARIES

United for Libraries is the Association of Library Trustees, Advocates, Friends and Foundations. The former body (FOLUSA) Friends of Libraries USA are now part of United for Libraries.

The Citizens-Save-Libraries Power Guide has been created to give strong support and direction to assist library advocacy. Friends groups, even within Australia can gain inspiration from some of the messages and examples. Take a look at www.ala.org/united/powerguide

“United for Libraries is a national network of enthusiastic library supporters who believe in the importance of libraries as the social and intellectual centers of communities and campuses. No one has a stronger voice for libraries than those who use them, raise money for them, and govern them. By uniting these voices, library supporters everywhere will become a real force to be reckoned with at the local, state, and national levels.”

What Today Is All About

- Discussion of how to position your library as an essential service
- Your library’s relationship between marketing and public relations
- Why staff and trustees must be advocates for their library
- Making the Library a political plus for your local elected officials and being more effective
“The 2018 Friends Medal was awarded to Shirley Gollings, recognising 20 years of service to the Friends. The Friends will be celebrating 30 years in 2020, and presently have a membership of over 2,000, making it the largest library Friends in the country.”

**Balmain (NSW)**
Fiona Mitchell, Chair of the FOBL committee has outlined another very successful year for the Friends in Balmain, read her report at: https://fobl.org.au/2019/04/30/fobl-agm-2019-chairs-report/

**Toowoomba (Qld)**
A full calendar of events outlined on the Friends facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/events/953748905000017/

**Wollongong (NSW)**

**Wingecarribee (NSW)**

“Australian writer Candice Fox is a New York Times No.1 best selling crime fiction author whose own and collaborative works are published globally. She has written ten novels, the latest being Gone By Midnight. She has twice won the Ned Nelly Award For Crime writing. In 2016 Candice started collaborating on a series of novels with best selling author James Patterson and their first book Never Never hit the best seller list immediately. We look forward to hearing Candice talk about her fast-paced novels and her complex, likeable characters. Do join us.”

**Murrindindi (Vic)**
Operates 2 Friends Bookshops, one at Alexandra and the other at Yea. It also has one of the oldest Junior Friends groups in the country at Alexandra. And a third FOL group at Kinglake. www.murrindindi.vic.gov.au/Our-Community/libraries/friends-of-the-library

**National Library of Australia (ACT)**
The 2018 Friends Medal was awarded to Shirley Gollings, recognising 20 years of service to the Friends. The Friends will be celebrating 30 years in 2020, and presently have a membership of over 2,000, making it the largest library Friends in the country. https://www.nla.gov.au/sites/default/files/blogs/friends_newsletter_summer2018_online_incl_insert.pdf

**Advance notice - Friends Forum 2020 @ Mount Gambier**
Our next Friends Forum to be held in South Australia will take place at Mount Gambier Library in September 2020.
CATEGORIES
Membership fee incorporating News Update
Individual $20
FOL Group—0-25 Members $35
FOL Group—25+ Members $70
Libraries $140
Institutions incl. Libraries with multiple Friends groups $140
Corporations $140
Extra copies of News Update $10 per annum

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Friends Resource Book | Daniel Ferguson

Order Form

Name

Address

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Please send me a copy of Friends of Libraries Resource Book (2005)
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www.fola.org.au

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