



10 July 2015

Nedlands Library Celebrates half a Century

The City's oldest library is celebrating a milestone birthday on Thursday 23 July with celebrations planned to last throughout the week of 21 – 26 July 2015.

The 50th birthday celebrations will kick off with the fourth biennial 'A Day of Literary Feasting' on Tuesday 21 July.

The Nedlands Library was inspired by the former City of Nedlands Mayor John Charles Smith. Mr Smith wanted to establish a stronger sense of community and felt a library was an essential community facility for a city. He liaised with the Library Board of Western Australia and in 1961 the Board gave permission for a library.

The Nedlands Library was officially opened on 23 July 1965 by his Excellency the Governor Mayor General Sir Douglas Kendrew and has noticeably changed over the years.

City of Nedlands Mayor Max Hipkins said: "It is a pleasure to be a part of the Library's 50th celebrations. The library system has changed dramatically in 50 years. I can recall the days of when the date stamp was in the back of the book.

"My fondest library memories are reading to my children at bed-time and (later) encouraging them to read with the aid of library books – but that was more than 20 years' ago. My main contact with the library now is through the local history collection and the periodic author talks, which I find stimulating."

Two of the City's longest standing employees are Carmel Wright who has worked at both of the City's libraries for 46 years in September and Susan West who has worked at the Nedlands Library for 30 years.

Carmel started at the Nedlands Library in 1969 before moving to Mt Claremont Library in 1992. When Carmel started working at the library it operated using The Browne Issue System. When a library patron borrowed a book, the librarian took one of the reader's borrowing cards and removed the book's personal card from the book.

The two cards were filed together in trays. Nonfiction books were organised by the Dewey number and fiction books were filed alphabetically by the author.

When the reader returned the book, their borrowing card was returned to them and the book card was replaced in the book.

In 1991 the library moved to the automated system.

"Technology has made it a lot easier. It is a totally different system and it is now much easier to keep track of books.

“The library itself has changed over the 50 years. Libraries now offer different resources such as talking books, DVDs and CDs, which it didn’t offer back then of course because these resources didn’t exist. But libraries are always a great thing for the community. It’s nice that they are still surviving. People still like a book,” said Carmel.

“I have worked from the Browne cards system through to automation in the library and the one thing that I hope will endure is the one-on-one customer service that we provide. It’s great watching clients grow from infants to adults and bring their own children to the library,” said Susan.

Come help the Library Celebrate 50 years

During the week there will be activities running in the library including:

Tuesday 21 July:

A Day of Literary Feasting
9.50 am – 2.45 pm

Thursday 23 July:

50th Anniversary Morning Tea
10 am – 11 am

Sunday 26 July:

Family Fun afternoon
1.30 – 4.30 pm
Featuring a balloon artist, face painter and activities for children including biscuit decorating.

For more information about 50th anniversary events and activities or A Literary Day of Feasting, please contact the Nedlands library on 9273 3644 or library@nedlands.wa.gov.au

ENDS

About the City of Nedlands

The City of Nedlands is situated 7km from Perth and stretches from the banks of the Swan River to the edge of the Indian Ocean. A population of over 21,000 live in the suburbs of Nedlands, Dalkeith, Mt Claremont, Swanbourne, Karrakatta, and parts of Floreat and Shenton Park.

For further information please contact communications@nedlands.wa.gov.au or 9273 350