

Australian School Library Day 2022!

By Jacqueline Griffeth, Suzanne Livett and Holly Godfree with supporting images from Milena Gates, Marianne Smith and Margaret Sinnott

Snapshot

Jacqueline Griffeth, Suzanne Livett and Holly Godfree share experiences of the newly created Australian School Library Day. Their words are illustrated with images of how various schools celebrated this new and important day in our calendar.

After months of promotion, the inaugural Australian School Library Day has landed! We're so thankful to the CBCA for allowing us to celebrate Australian school libraries and the wonderful work they do in the middle of Book Week. To mark the occasion, we've asked Jacqueline Griffeth, teacher librarian at Mount Waverley Primary School to give us a run down of how her school has celebrated the first #ASLD.

ASLD is the perfect way to spotlight the sometimes-missing link between what people literally see in a school library and what happens behind-the-scenes to make it all happen. We want to raise awareness about the difference a great library makes to the community of a school.

Some school leaders around Australia now have possibly never seen a thriving school library run by qualified staff – they may think they know what modern school libraries are capable of, but for some, their only experience has been of a dreary or tired space with a collection of books selected decades ago by a well-meaning but out-of-touch volunteer. How can they imagine a place which opens before school and welcomes parents and children to read together and to meet other families, which is open at lunchtime as place refuge or recreation, which is open after school as a refuelling point on the way home, and which reaches out to the whole community to educate, inform, engage and support the role of parents and teachers in fostering their children's literacy?

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So, I was quite pleased about this addition to Book Week.

The challenge has been to adequately celebrate the opportunity in the wake of a slowly diminishing pandemic. Now there are so many Covid considerations – what is safe? What is permitted but nevertheless risky? Can you do that with a mask on?

It's hard to separate ASLD celebrations from Book Week celebrations, (and isn't that the point?). So, here's what we did at MWPS.

The Book Week celebrations began one week prior, when author Jacqueline Harvey visited to promote her new series *Willa and Woof*, signing books and inspiring our students with her energising presentation about writing.

On the Monday of Book Week, the children were invited to come dressed as a character from a favourite book. We only returned to this old regular the year before Covid began, after writing it off for years because of the blurring lines between movie characters and book characters. The revival was a triumph of community, so we're back on the bandwagon. However, we were not permitted the whole 750 students plus parents in the gym for a parade, so it was a slightly muted but still enjoyable experience.

Every Year Level began a 'progressive story' on the Monday, which was generated in one class and travelled through all five classes over the week, to be revealed and celebrated on Friday.

Classes embraced Drop Everything And Read Day (DEAR Day), and also invited children to bring and share their favourite book, or their mum or dad's favourite book when they were young.

Dream related books, dream related writing and art ideas, as well as Indigenous stories and non-fiction were displayed in the staff room for staff to choose from, together with resources or links to them to support busy teachers.

Book quizzes were on offer – True or False, Who Said...? What Happened Next? Where do I belong?

Each class created their own "Dreaming with Eyes Wide Open" poster. This was based on the Eyes Wide Open display on the library display board.



Classes created their own 'Dreaming with eyes wide open' poster for a school display of favourite books within which to dream.

Class teachers and students created the iris by writing the title and author of their favourite book or series, complete with publisher as per a book spine, on a segment of coloured paper, and pasted it on one of the 'iris' wedges. We still have to laminate these and find a cool place to display them...and I have to tell you, 34 very large eyes are a lot to cut out!

To celebrate ASLD, students were invited to enter a poem about school libraries...

To celebrate ASLD, students were invited to enter a poem about school libraries or libraries and books in general, in a competition for a book vouchers. This was inspired by a poem about libraries written by a student and submitted to the Australian Children's Poetry website. As part of the celebrations the library was open as usual before school and remained open at recess and all of lunchtime instead of just

The Book

I walked in the store
Before grabbing the book
I looked around longing for more
There were books as far as the eye could look

Then my eye cast on a hardback
It was a book the other stores did lack
I'd been wanting to read it for ages
I grabbed hold of its dear old pages

I could not help it, I started to read
This dear old book I really did need
I went up to the counter, handed over my
money
From what I'd read I knew it was good and
funny

I finished the book and it was a sensation
The book inspired me to make my own creation!

By Amelia S

second half, and the library team were desperate for a cup of tea by the end of the day!

Fantasy Feast Friday was the culmination of a busy week. Children were invited to bring a fantasy lunch based on a book. (When I suggested to the children that a fantasy feast *might* feature an empty lunchbox, I was greeted with raised eyebrows, eye-rolling and groans... I thought it was a good joke!)

But already, students were thinking of the possibilities...who can forget *Bertie Botts Every Flavour Beans* and the chocolate frogs from Harry Potter? And what about the *Mad Hatter's Tea Party*, and *Stone Soup* - an absolute classic from many cultures. It didn't have to be actually edible! *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, *Possum Magic*, *The Incredible Book Eating Boy*, *The Tiger who Came to Tea*, *I Don't Like Peas!* *Oliver's Vegetables*, *I Will not Never ever Eat a Tomato*, *Wombat Stew*... the list went on and the books were there in the staff room display.

The only thing that was a disappointment was the one thing we really wanted to do because it would fit so beautifully with the idea of Australian School Libraries and school community. For some years before Covid we opened the library on the Saturday at the end of Book Week and invited our school community to come at some point in the day that suited their busy family routines and simply... read together. Grandparents, big brothers, Mums and Dads, past students, fantastic supportive staff members, would drop in and read together, make bookmarks together, chat together, borrow, read. It was a long, low key, heart-warming day and a fantastic celebration of the power of family reading. We really hoped we could do it again this year as a celebration of Australian School Library Day, but concern about rising Covid numbers naturally prevailed so it's on the back burner till next year.

Final Note from the Students Need School Libraries campaign:

We love the enthusiasm that school library staff like Jacqueline have shown for the inaugural Australian School Library Day - especially since there was relatively short notice about it happening in busy Book Week 2022.

We expect that momentum will build over the years and Australian School Library Day will increasingly become a day of advocacy and influence, as well as celebration, of the important (often hidden) work school library staff do.

If you have great ideas about how busy library staff can do this, please share them via the Contact Us page on our website and we can add them to our menu of ideas for #ASLD2023 and beyond.



Australian School Library Day 2022

Emmanuel College, Warrnambool (a Catholic secondary school in regional Victoria) celebrated the inaugural Australian School Library Day (ASLD) with popcorn and wearing colourful glasses. Students visiting the Library were able to have some fun while finding out about Book Week and Australian School Library Day. Our Library TV featured the ASLD information.



The Library collaborated with the Food Tech and English departments to nourish Warrandyte staff, both body and soul, for Australian School Libraries Day, Marianne Smith, Warrandyte High School.

Milena Gates, Keilor Down Secondary College

Jacqueline Griffeth is a teacher librarian at Mount Waverley Primary school.

Suzanne Livett is Head of Library Services at Somerville House, Brisbane. She serves on the leadership team of the Students Need School Libraries campaign.

Holly Godfree coordinates the Students Need School Libraries campaign and is a teacher librarian at a public senior secondary school in Canberra.