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2008

# Supporting literacy and learning - on and off campus

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## Publication Details

The article was originally published as Pinkerton, F and Collett, C, Supporting literacy and learning - on and off campus, *inCite*, 2008, 29(5), 14.

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## Supporting literacy and learning - on and off campus

### **Abstract**

There's no doubt that the Library is the hub of learning and information literacy at University of Wollongong's (UOW) campus. Attracting close to a million visitors each year, the library provides hands-on information literacy training to almost 20,000 clients. However the staff's commitment to literacy and learning extends beyond the campus and into the broader community; participating in fundraising and contributing to local, national and international causes, all with a focus on literacy and learning. In 2007, the UOW Library's Wellbeing Committee fundraising efforts were directed towards the Books in Homes Australia (BIHA) program.

### **Disciplines**

Arts and Humanities | Social and Behavioral Sciences

### **Publication Details**

The article was originally published as Pinkerton, F and Collett, C, Supporting literacy and learning - on and off campus, in *Cite*, 2008, 29(5), 14.

## Learning and Literacy

### Supporting literacy and learning - on and off campus

There's no doubt that the Library is the hub of learning and information literacy at the University of Wollongong's (UOW) campus. Attracting close to a million visitors each year, the library provides hands-on information literacy training to almost 20,000 clients. However the staff's commitment to literacy and learning extends beyond the campus and into the broader community; participating in fundraising and contributing to local, national and international causes, all with a focus on literacy and learning.

In 2007, the UOW Library's Wellbeing Committee fundraising efforts were directed towards the Books in Homes Australia (BIHA) program.

BIHA aims to alter the journey of young children growing up in disadvantaged circumstances in Australia, working on the premise that being born into a disadvantaged or isolated community should not exclude any child from achieving their potential.

Children living in less privileged circumstances often lack ready access to books. A love of books is something that lasts a lifetime and can make a significant difference in the lives of disadvantaged children. Once given the chance to develop confidence in reading, it is well recognised that children gain greater benefit from their schooling and more opportunities to live a productive and rewarding life.

There are currently 10,000 children in the BIHA program, encompassing 107 disadvantaged school communities across New South Wales. Every participating child is able to select a number of quality books each year, allowing them to build their own home libraries and share the experience of reading with their families. BIHA also donates a Preview Pack to each school library involved in the program. The packs consist of 48 titles provided over three terms, of which 25% are titles by Indigenous authors.

Money raised by UOW Library was allocated to nearby Kemblawarra Public School, which burned down in 2002 and was rebuilt by late 2004. This small school, consisting of only four classes and about 85 children, draws students from diverse backgrounds including low socio-economic and often disadvantaged or troubled families. The school community also includes the traditional caretakers of the Wadi-Wadi people as well as children from non-English speaking backgrounds.

The UOW Library is eager to offer continued support to Books in Homes Australia, and staff are delighted that their fundraising efforts are helping needy children in the Illawarra region.

More information on Books in Homes Australia is available <http://www.biha.com.au/>

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