



Wollongong Living Library

Are you interested in becoming a volunteer 'book' with the Wollongong Living Library?

What is involved?

The role of a 'book' can be demanding and challenging, but also interesting and fun. 'Books' are asked to choose the events they would like to participate in and commit their time accordingly. The commitment is as big or as little as you are able to give. Our emphasis is not so much on the amount of time you can give – any time will be greatly appreciated – rather, we need 'books' who are reliable.

What is the time commitment?

The program consists of a series of one-off events with schools, community organisations and Council. Each event is approximately 3 hours, with a number of 30 or 40 minute conversations.

What is required?

As a 'book', you are required to 'be yourself' and share your life story. No more, no less – just be available, as you are, to answer questions about your life which will help 'readers' understand you better. No formal background in public speaking is necessary.

Who are the 'readers'?

'Readers' or borrowers are community members and school students who have a genuine interest in learning more about you and your lifestyle.

What makes a good 'book'?

A 'book' for the Living Library will be chosen on the following qualities. Can you answer 'yes' to these questions. Are you:

- reliable?
- able to answer questions honestly?
- able to respond appropriately to stereotypes and prejudices?
- willing to help people learn about different lifestyles?
- able to be clear about your lifestyle but not preach about it?
- willing to talk with a range of different readers?
- reflective and mature in attitude?
- a good listener and not too talkative?
- confident to talk with people you don't know?

If you answered 'yes' to these questions, and you are interested in finding out more, or nominating to become a 'book' with the Wollongong Living Library, please phone or email the organisers listed below.

Each 'book' chooses their title, based on the story and life experiences they wish to share. Every 'book' has the right to decline disclosing information they prefer not to share. In past events, 'books' have simply said "those pages are missing" or "that chapter is best left unopened".

Training and support

We greatly value the time and contribution of our volunteer 'Books'. To ensure you enjoy your experience, we provide:

- induction & orientation
- support with defining and refining your story
- debriefing after events
- training workshops
- social events

We always provide food and refreshments at events and workshops, and offer a travel subsidy.

Further information

Wollongong Living Library:

www.wollongong.nsw.gov.au/service/community/livinglibrary/Pages/default.aspx

Living Libraries Australia: www.livinglibraries.org.au

The European website: www.living-library.org

To read a transcript from Andrew Denton's interview with a Danish living 'book':

<http://abc.net.au/jtv/video/default.htm?clip=livinglibrary>

What should I do now?

If you are keen to be a volunteer living 'book', please ring the project workers below to set up a meeting. Think about the story you would like to share, and whether you would enjoy the opportunity of sharing it with a broad range of people. You can also:

- Draft a title for your book – keep it simple
- Make dot points of your story

Wollongong's Living Library contacts:

Tracey Needham 4227 7245

Vimala Colless 4227 7492

Email: tneedham@wollongong.nsw.gov.au

vcolless@wollongong.nsw.gov.au