

# 'A place of congregation and communion'

On Tuesday 30 August, ACT Chief Minister Jon Stanhope opened the new Kippax public library. He was introduced to the assembled guests by Merrilee Pigram, the general manager of the ACT Library and Information Service. They both praised the work of the architects, Michael Murray and Meta Anne Shirley, who created this entirely new library building for the West Belconnen area.

The original library opened in 1978, in a 'temporary' demountable building, which soon became inadequate for the needs of a growing community. Forty-four thousand people a year attend a function at an ACT public library, and make 1.8 million visits to one. The new building will be able to accommodate



*Opening day crowds*

the West Belconnen share of these numbers with ease; it is four times larger than the old library, with a community room available as well as the library space.

Libraries Alive! consultants Ian McCallum and Sherrey Quinn undertook the original community consultation and wrote the service specifications from which the architect developed the plans. Mr Murray praised their research and analysis, saying that a good brief made such a difference when developing a project. The result of community consultation, best practice and the architect's vision is an ultra-flexible space in the centre of Kippax shopping precinct. It is important to the architect that the building is obviously a library, that books and people are visible inside the building through the large bay windows that are a feature of three walls. Librarians and patrons love the layout: there are no hidden corners or awkward spaces, making the library easy to manage and navigate.

The Library Service has been developing the collection for the new building over the last year, at a cost of around \$500 000. The collection has expanded by around 40 per cent, with commu-



nity input forming an important part of the selection process. Ginninderra High School students should be pleased with the new youth collection they helped create. Over 300 people flowed into the new \$3.5 million library after the opening, borrowing began immediately and the 10 computers available for public use were very popular. ■



*Jacinta Davies (left) and Rukhmani Pillay are looking forward to continuing their storytime attendance in the new library*