

LITERACY PROGRAMMING FOR YOUNG ADULTS WA PUBLIC LIBRARIES TOOLKIT

The ability to read and write underpins everything we do, every day. A literate community is strong and inclusive, where individuals and families are resilient, aspirational, socially engaged, informed, healthy and connected.

Research from the Australian Productivity Commission outlines the links between literacy skills and education, employment, health, social and community participation, and states that higher levels of literacy are associated with higher educational attainment, greater earning potential, better health outcomes, and increased community participation and personal wellbeing.

In 2017, the State Library of Western Australia launched the [Literacy Matters Literacy Strategy 2017–2027](#) with the goal that all Western Australians:

- Are **aware** of the value of literacy in opening up lifelong potential and learning
- Have the **opportunity** to improve their literacy skills
- Have **access** to literacy learning programs

The Literacy Matters Action Plan 2018-2023 identified the need for new literacy programs and services for young people aged 15 to 25 years, to address a gap in informal literacy services for this cohort.

This toolkit seeks to assist libraries to build on the foundations of literacy programs and services for children and families, by providing programs and services that support young adults' literacy and learning to help them achieve their educational, employment and personal goals.




“You could rattle the stars,” she whispered. “You could do anything, if only you dared.”

– Sarah J. Maas, Throne of Glass

PROGRAMMING FRAMEWORK

The following framework is intended to guide library thinking in relation to the development and delivery of library-based literacy programming for young adults. It is not envisioned that every program will address all elements of the framework, rather it provides some key considerations that will help ensure that your programming meets both your library's and your community's needs.

Program Considerations	Questions to Ask	Strategies for Addressing	Examples
Library Outcomes	Is there a clear link between your program and the core business/ key strategic directions of your library?	Ensure that you can articulate how your program supports the strategic planning of your library service.	Our <i>YA Book Club</i> supports our library's key direction of building literacy in our community by encouraging young adults to engage in reading activities.
Literacy Development Outcomes	What literacy outcomes have you built into your program? Are the literacy outcomes explicitly stated? Have you provided links to library collections for those attending?	Make explicit the literacy elements and outcomes of the program. Look for opportunities to introduce participants to elements of your collection that you think will be of interest.	Our <i>CoderDojo</i> workshops help to develop young adults' digital literacy, critical thinking, and communication skills. The development of these skills will assist them in the pursuit of their educational, personal and employment goals.
Accessibility	Is your program accessible for people with additional needs? Does your program meet the requirements of your Local Government, or in-house, Disability and Inclusion (DAIP) Plan?	Ensure that your program meets DAIP requirements. Alternatively, you might decide to modify and run a similar but separate program to support participation by a specific group in your community.	The sessions are held in an open area of the library that is accessible via the lift and is wheelchair friendly.
Cultural Inclusivity 	Is your program sensitive to the needs of the various cultural groups in your community, and does it celebrate cultural differences?	Use data from sources such as the Office of Multicultural Interests (OMI) and the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) to gain an understanding of the cultural diversity of your community.	In celebration of Harmony Week, we will be hosting a <i>writing workshop</i> with a writer from the local (<i>community</i>). Participants will develop their creative writing, communication and digital literacy skills by writing a piece that explores what harmony means to them and then publishing it online.
Gender Inclusivity	Does your program use gender neutral language to encourage participation by all?	Review program marketing and materials to ensure that this information does not suggest that the program is targeting one specific gender group.	<i>Come along to our CoderDojo club on Tuesdays from 6pm to 7pm, and learn how to code and develop apps, games and more. All are welcome!</i>

Program Considerations	Questions to Ask	Strategies for Addressing	Examples
Community	Are any similar programs happening in your community? Who is your target audience for this program, and what other services might they be engaging in?	Talk to stakeholders in your community. Research your community.	Our <i>Homework Help</i> club from 4pm to 6 pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays supports young people with their homework tasks. Tutors are available for a range of subjects, and can help students to develop their study skills.
Limitations	What space, budget and resource constraints do you have?	Consider the program within the delivery of the library service.	<i>(This program)</i> will accommodate a maximum of 15 attendees and will be delivered in the open area on the second floor. Resources will be purchased from the youngadults' program budget and staff time will come from within the staffing budget.

*“What is the point of being alive if you don’t at least try
to do something remarkable?”*

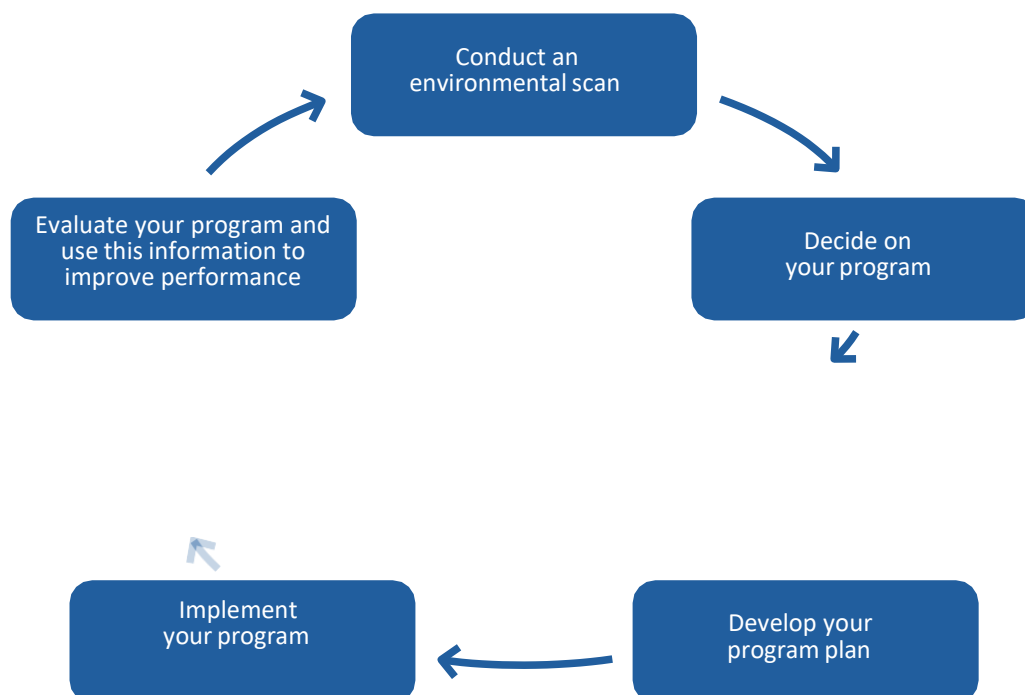
– John Green, An Abundance of Katherines

HOW TO GET STARTED?

Tips for planning a program

- Community Mapping. Map out stakeholders in your community (who are the people that will attend the program, where do they spend time, who can you partner with?) For Young Adults consider high schools, shopping centres, cinemas, youth groups, local businesses such as games stores etc. [ABS Community Profiles](#) can help provide an overview of the community.
- Reach out to stakeholders to help prepare for the project, including determining interest and finding out what else is happening in the community that is similar. For example, the local gaming store may be interested in running a 'Dungeons and Dragons' club hosted by the library. If the local youth centre already runs one, it may be possible to setup a tournament between the two.
- Use relevant data where available to support targeting specific areas or skills in your community.
- Reach out to other libraries running similar projects to find out what has and hasn't worked for them and how they have delivered similar projects. You can do this via the [Libraries, Learning and Literacy Group](#) (LLLG) or [Public LibrariesOnline](#) (PLO).
- Consider this information within the limitations of your library service. If the budget is tight, you could make the space attractive by adding a few beanbags. Consider having a phone charging station. Consider any staff training needed to support the delivery of the program.
- Consult with appropriate people to discuss plans for access and inclusion (Youth Development Staff, Indigenous Project Officer, Access and Inclusion Project Officer, local networking groups, local service providers, local community members such as elders etc.). Getting to know the young people who come into the library, and using consistent messaging about appropriate behaviour, is important. Youth services can provide advice about how to communicate effectively with young people.
- Consult the library team on their thoughts and support for the project. Engaging colleagues is more likely to result in a program that they feel confident promoting and supporting.
- Use this information to develop a program plan and seek feedback on the plan from appropriate stakeholders.

Your planning should include the following stages:



PROGRAM PLAN TEMPLATE

Program Title:	<i>Enter the planned name for the program.</i>
Target Audience:	<i>Enter the target audience for the program.</i>
Background:	<i>Enter the relevant background information for the project. For example, where the idea came from and reasoning for delivering the program with support from research if applicable.</i>
Objectives:	Library Outcomes – <i>Links to Library strategic plans or other sources relevant to library service</i> Literacy Outcomes – <i>Reflects the literacy learning outcomes for participants of the program.</i>
Scope:	<i>Enter summary information about when, where, and how often the program will be delivered as well as what will be delivered.</i>
Accessibility Adaptations or Considerations:	<i>Enter any ideas for how to support accessibility.</i> The Accessible Events guide for organisers, developed by the Meetings and Events Industry of Australia and the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, is designed to help organisers to ensure that events are accessible for people with disabilities. Also consider the accessibility of any online promotional material – try to conform with W3C's WebContent Accessibility Guidelines .
Cultural Considerations:	<i>Enter any ideas for how to demonstrate cultural respect.</i>
Required Resources:	<i>Enter all resources required to deliver the program.</i>
Budget:	<i>Enter approximate costs required to deliver the program.</i>
Stakeholders:	<i>Enter all people involved in the project, including internal and external stakeholders such as potential partners and participants. If known, outline their involvement in the project.</i>
Promotion:	<i>Enter the methods used to promote the program.</i>
Evaluation:	<i>Enter the methods used to evaluate the program.</i> <i>Consider using short-term evaluation – for attendance figures, feedback from participants etc; and long-term evaluation – for the impact of the program, including changes in behaviour or progress made as a result of participation.</i> <i>Tips for evaluation are included on page 14 of this toolkit.</i> <i>The Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) has a useful step-by step guide.</i>

EXAMPLE PROGRAM PLAN 1

Program Title:	Young Adult Book Club
Target Audience:	Young Adults aged 15–25
Background:	Some of the regular young adult patrons expressed an interest in joining a book club. BorrowBox Library released campaign titles which allow multiple downloads at once. This will enable participants of the book club to read the same book without the library needing to purchase large sets. However, as it also requires access to a device, and the library is limited to only the choice offered by BorrowBox, participants can also choose to read a book on a similar topic, in a similar genre or by the same author.
Objectives:	<p>Library Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The program encourages borrowing of both the physical young adult collection and e-resources, with a focus on promoting the campaign titles available through BorrowBox. <p>Literacy Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Each month we showcase a range of titles from our library collections that relate to the focus of the book club – Young Adults are encouraged to read and engage with a variety of titles and topics – We build communication skills facilitating a discussion based on the focus each month
Scope:	The Young Adult Book Club meets on the last Thursday of every month, from 4:00pm-5:30pm, February – November. Afternoon tea is supplied to encourage young people to socialise and further discuss the books, and a staff member will attend to facilitate the discussion as needed.
Accessibility Adaptations or Considerations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Books are available as an ebook with access to BorrowBox accessibility features such as the ability to change the size and type of font, including dyslexic font, or to access VoiceOver functionality. – Those that do not have access to a device can read the book on the public computers available at the library, borrow a physical copy if available, or choose to read a book on a similar topic, in the same genre, or by the same author. A display of these books will be made available each month. – Participants could also opt to access an audio book or ebook through other apps such as OverDrive.
Cultural Considerations:	Consider topics and titles that celebrate and recognise a variety of cultures.
Required Resources:	1 staff member, BorrowBox, relevant collection titles, discussion questions prepared by staff, chairs and tables, afternoon tea.

Budget:	<p>Afternoon tea \$15 per session x 10 sessions = \$150 per year</p> <p>Staff member time (Approximately 2 hour delivery, set up and pack up, 2 hours preparing per month, and 2 hours to set up and maintain a display.) 6 hours approx. \$200 per month x 10 months = \$2,000 per year</p> <p>Initial promotion = \$250 (\$150 for print materials and \$100 for a boosted post)</p> <p>Total budget = \$2,400 per year</p>
Stakeholders:	Youth development team, local high schools, local youth groups.
Promotion:	Website, Social media, Print material – some placed near Young Adult books. Local radio, information sent to local high schools. School contact information .
Evaluation:	Facilitators will ask participants how it went at the end of each session and if they have any suggestions. A survey will be offered to participants in June and November addressing the objectives of the program. Staff will have an informal discussion and review of the program considering survey feedback and anecdotal feedback from participants. Decisions will be made for any modifications needed and future planning for the upcoming sessions.

EXAMPLE PROGRAM PLAN 2

Program Title:	Dungeons and Dragons Club
Target Audience:	Young Adults aged 16+
Background:	<p>Groups of young people come into the library to play Dungeons and Dragons. A potential volunteer has indicated an interest in teaching people how to play. By formalising a club, we would meet an existing need by teaching young people how to play the game, while building new social networks in a safe and accessible place.</p> <p>The Dungeons and Dragons roleplaying game is about storytelling in worlds of sword and sorcery. It shares elements with childhood games of make-believe. Like those games, D&D is driven by imagination. Unlike a game of make-believe, D&D gives structure to the stories, away of determining the consequences of the adventurers' actions. Players roll dice to resolve whether their attacks hit or miss or whether their adventurers succeed.</p> <p>In the game, each player creates an adventurer (also called a character) and teams up with other adventurers (played by friends). Working together, the group might explore a dark dungeon, a ruined city, a haunted castle, a lost temple deep in a jungle, or a lava-filled cavern beneath a mysterious mountain.</p> <p>The adventurers can solve puzzles, talk with other characters, battle fantastic monsters, and discover fabulous magic items and other treasure. Often groups write down their adventures and develop shared glossaries of terms relevant to their game.</p>
Objectives:	<p>Library Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Engaging with young adults in the library – Building broader community connections <p>Literacy Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Increased understanding of collaborative storytelling structures – Increased use of creative and imaginative language – Increased literacy-based problem solving – Expanded written and spoken vocabulary
Scope:	Saturdays 1pm–4pm (with scope for further negotiation with the group) in a small study room in the library. Library volunteer acts as a point of contact for the participants and is responsible for bringing all the materials (including pencils, paper, dice). Books and kits may be purchased later and added to the library collection.
Accessibility Adaptations or Considerations:	Basic materials are provided by the library. The game is adaptable to meet the special needs of the exiting players. Each player has a character sheet which has been designed to be Dyslexia friendly. The room is wheel-chair accessible. Guidelines are established for the group around respecting differences.
Cultural Considerations:	A debrief occurs at the end of each session, to ensure that all players felt comfortable, and to explore how stereotypes may have been applied. Inclusion of a wide variety of cultural elements is encouraged, and these can include the languages or dialects of the players involved.

Required Resources:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A private room (if possible, for noise considerations) – Tables and chairs – Character sheets, pencils, notebooks and dice – A volunteer to set up, and debrief – Additional books could be purchased and added to the library collection
Budget:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – In house graphic designer – Free advertising on social media – Volunteer staffed – Existing room and furniture – Notebooks, printing of character sheets, pencils, and dice = \$100 for the year
Stakeholders:	Youth Development Officers, Library Officers, Library Volunteers, local Youth Centre, local high school library, local gaming shops, online D&D Perth network, existing library members 16+ and local youth in general.
Promotion:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A4 poster – DL flyer – FB social media posts – Special Promotion during International Games Week via social media (late Oct/early Nov).
Evaluation:	<p>A record of attendance is kept. Success can be largely determined by whether the participants keep coming back.</p> <p>Another indication of success would be that the groups start to meet of their own accord.</p> <p>Satisfaction can be gauged through anecdotal notes from the facilitated debrief sessions.</p> <p>Specific feedback is collected using 'Culture Counts' which allows participants to answer questions such as 'Has D&D improved your reading and writing skills?'</p>

PLANNING A SESSION

Session Plan Template

Program: <i>Enter title of program</i>	Date: <i>Enter Date</i>	Staff Member: <i>Enter staff member planning session</i>
Topic:	<i>Provide a summary of the focus of the session</i>	
Relevant links if applicable:	<i>Enter any links which might be useful to support delivery of the session</i>	
Learning Outcome:	<i>Outline the learning outcome planned for adults participating in the session</i>	
Access and Inclusion considerations:	<i>Make a note of any considerations to ensure the session is accessible</i>	
Resources:	<i>List all resources required to deliver the session</i>	
Set up:	<i>Make any notes for how the session should be set up</i>	
Introduction:	<i>Describe how the session will be introduced</i>	
Steps:	<i>Outline the steps for the session</i>	
Conclusion:	<i>Describe how the session will be concluded</i>	

*“Just because you can’t experience everything
doesn’t mean you shouldn’t experience anything.”*

– Nicola Yoon, Everything, Everything

Example Session Plan

Program: Young Adult Book Club	Date:	Staff Member:
Topic:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – BorrowBox Young Adult Campaign Title <i>We Were Liars</i> by E. Lockhart – Other young adult titles by E. Lockhart such as <i>Again Again</i>, <i>Genuine Fraud</i>, <i>Dramarama</i>, <i>Fly on the Wall</i>, <i>The Disreputable History of Frankie Landau-Banks</i>, <i>ARuby Oliver Series</i> – Other young adult crime and mystery books 	
Relevant links if applicable:		
Learning Outcome:	Young Adults engage in meaningful social interaction around a common reading theme, developing both social and literacy skills. They can extend their understanding of reading material through this discussion.	
Access and Inclusion considerations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Participants can read different materials, in various formats, and at a variety of reading levels. They can choose reading material that is suitable for their needs – Discussion is casual with no reading or writing required in the session – Space is physically accessible – Code of conduct is visible and can be referred to if needed to ensure everyone knows all people are welcome and bullying or negative comments will not be tolerated 	
Resources:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Afternoon tea (crackers, vegetable sticks, dip, muffins, water, juice, cups and plates) – <i>People Bingo</i> cards laminated – Whiteboard markers – Discussion questions – Copies of books from display 	
Set up:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Chairs set up around a large table with afternoon tea in the middle – Books from display on a nearby table 	
Introduction:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Start the session with an icebreaker activity: <i>People Bingo</i> – Fill a bingo card with things a person may have or do, can be broad or specific. For example: visited Adventure World, have ever had a pet rabbit, etc. Consider something that people cannot see and will have to ask about, avoid 'has blond hair' for example. Mix up the sheets with different aspects and in different orders. Participants need to talk to each other to find out if the person fits any of the aspects and write their name in that square. Depending on the size of the group the winner can be the first to a certain number, to complete a row, or to fill their whole bingo card etc. – Introduce this week's theme and provide an opportunity for people to briefly share what they read and any thoughts on the topic 	

Steps:	<p>As needed, prompt conversation using discussion questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Do you think a crime can ever be justified? Why? – Do you think a friendship can be destructive? Why? – What do you think about free will? – Do you think there is ever a time where it is okay to lie? – What do you think about crime novels? – What are three words you would use to describe the book you read? – Would you recommend the book you read? Why?
Conclusion:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Thank everyone for coming along, ask if they have any feedback or suggestions for future sessions. Let them know they are welcome to approach you separately if they prefer – Remind everyone there are more books on this topic or by this author on the display if they would like to check them out, and you are there to help if they would like to find something else – Let them know next month's topic and when the session will be held – Allow time for the group to talk with each other and enjoy afternoon tea

“But even if we don’t have the power to choose where we come from, we can still choose where we go from there”

– Stephen Chbosky, The Perks of Being a Wallflower

TIPS FOR PROMOTING PROGRAMS FOR YOUNG ADULTS

- Utilise outreach opportunities – schools, youth centres, shopping centres etc. You may be able to ask a local business popular with young adults to display promotional material.
- Promote using engaging social media posts – consider polls, videos and competitions that will engage a young adult audience.
- Upselling – where the opportunity arises tell people about the program. For example, at existing programs and events, when they are browsing items on a related topic, or if they are asking about other types of programs etc.
- Send promotional material directly to stakeholders that can be shared via email, newsletters and social media.
- If you have some young adults who have expressed an interest in a program or are already attending, encourage them to bring a friend next time.

FINDING STAKEHOLDERS

- [School contact information](#).
- If you have a Community Development Officer in your organisation, they may be able to help with networks or groups in the area.
- Talk to youth staff within your organisation and reach out to youth services in the area by searching for them online.
- Find contact information for local shopping centres and businesses on their websites or visit the location in person.
- As contacts build ask them about suggestions for other contacts.

CELEBRATIONS AND SPECIAL DATES

Every day, week, or month of the year is dedicated to celebrating or recognise something. These can be opportunities to support program and events planning. You may also want to consider local events or dates of significance.

Here are some celebrations you may want to consider when planning for adults:

February 14	Library Lovers' Day
March	Harmony Week
April	Youth Week WA
May	National Youth Week
May	Library and Information Week
July	NAIDOC Week
September	R U OK? Day
September	Stay Smart Online Week
November	Australia Reads including the Australian Reading Hour
November	International Games Week
November	National Novel Writing Month

For more events visit the [Our Community Calendar](#) of nationally significant events

POTENTIAL SOURCES OF FUNDING

There are a variety of grants and sources of funding that can support the delivery of programs and events. Here are some examples:

- Australian Government make available grants including for [National Science Week engagement activities](#)
- [Scitech](#) sometimes have grants available for the delivery of STEM programs
- [Government of Western Australia Grants](#) (Youth Week and Youth Engagement grants)

OTHER SOURCES OF SUPPORT

- Scitech have [kits available to be borrowed](#)
- [STAR Net](#) is a resource developed to support libraries to deliver STEM programs
- Find [Australian author and illustrator websites](#) on the Literature Centre website, through [Fremantle Press](#) or [Paper Bird Speakers Agency](#)

TIPS FOR ENGAGING YOUNG ADULTS

- Greet young people so they feel valued and know they are welcome.
- Include an icebreaker activity to encourage the group to talk to and get to know each other. Include yourself in the activity so they can get to know and feel comfortable with you as well.
- Ask young adults for suggestions, they are more likely to attend something they have suggested.
- Don't be afraid to ask them to explain something you don't understand, for example youth slang. It is likely they will appreciate your honesty and enjoy teaching you something.
- Be willing to give up control of the program. If there are young people willing to take the lead, support them.
- Be flexible and adaptable, but also clear about your expectations around appropriate behaviour and the need to respect other library users.
- Consider providing morning or afternoon tea to give participants time to talk to each other.

PASSIVE PROGRAMMING

Passive programming can provide opportunities to engage with communities and develop literacy skills when there are limitations on staff time available. Here are some ideas for delivering passive programming to young adults:

- Interactive displays in the library. These are displays that have something for people to do - it might be adding a post it note with feedback, adding to a public art work, a space to take selfies, or placing a sticker on a map to show where they are from. The possibilities are endless.
- Pop-up activities relating to a special day/week e.g. for World Poetry Day try Black Out Poetry. Using discard books that have no further use, pull out the pages of these books and leave them on a table with black markers. Encourage people to black out the words on the page to make a poem with the words that remain. An alternative version of this activity is Book Spine Poetry. The aim is to create a poem using the words on the spine of the book. Participants pile the books up in a particular order to create the poem. These could remain displayed or could be photographed and entered in a competition.
- Take home kits – these would have the resources someone would need for an activity, such as planting seeds or making a bookmark.
- Competitions (could be external or local library led).

COMPETITIONS

- [The Golden Pen – Scribblers Festival](#)
- [Tim Winton Award for Young Writers](#)
- [KSP Writers Centre Competitions](#)
- [Writing WA directory of Youth Competitions](#)

TIPS FOR EVALUATION

- Listen to feedback from young adults to support the development and shaping of a program
- Keep surveys short and simple – only ask for information that is useful. Encourage them to complete the survey as part of the program over completing later from home
- Consult with a youth advisory group if available
- Feedback could come from polls or comments on social media posts

ALPHABETICAL LIST OF LINKS

[ABS Census Community Profiles](#)

[ALIA: Ideas for campaigns and events in your library](#) (Library Lovers' Day, Harmony Week, Library and Information Week, National Simultaneous Storytime, International Games Week)

[ALIA: Policies, standards and guidelines](#)

[ATSILIRN Protocols for Libraries, Archives and Information Services Australia](#)

[Reads](#)

[Australian Institute of Family Studies \(AIFS\) Business.gov.au:](#)

[Grants and Programs](#)

[Connections – Toolkit for Western Australian Public Libraries working with culturally diverse communities](#)

[Department of Communities Projects](#)

[Fremantle Press Authors and Artists Directory](#)

[Government of Western Australia Community Grants Program KSP](#)

[Writers Centre Competitions](#)

[Libraries, Literacy and Learning Group](#)

[Literacy Matters: State Library of Western Australia Literacy Strategy 2017–2027 The](#)

[Literature Centre Authors and Illustrators](#)

[NAIDOC Week](#)

[NaNoWriMo](#)

[National Science Week](#)

[National Youth Week](#)

[Our Community Calendar of nationally significant events Paper](#)

[Bird Speakers Agency](#)

[Public Libraries Online R](#)

[U OK?](#)

[Schools Online](#)

[Scitech](#)

[Scribblers Festival](#)

[Western Australian Literacy Alliance Writing](#)

[WA Directory of Youth Competitions](#)

*“People really are like houses with vast rooms and tiny windows. And
maybe it's a good thing, the way we never stop surprising each
other”*

– Becky Albertalli, Simon Vs. The Homo Sapiens Agenda