



On 'The Edge' at the State Library of Queensland

'Community engagement' has various meanings and practices including everything from information sharing to active participation. The State Library of Queensland has adopted child and young adult (YA) centred philosophies to develop The Edge, a program by which to engage young audiences.

Designed to nurture the social, intellectual and cultural development of children and YA's, the program aim to encourage lifelong learning, creative and critical thinking skills. Using the dynamic combination of space, programs and events, The Edge is specifically created for youth activities.

Located on Brisbane's river edge, The Edge is part of the Cultural Centre's old Auditorium redevelopment, located adjacent to The State Library of Queensland. With \$2.3 million from the state government over two years, the auditorium will become a unique centre delivering on site and online programs promoting, supporting and facilitating the holistic development of young people. The Edge will support active and creative knowledge and content creation, through both traditional methods and emerging technologies.

So how do young people engage with a building project? The Edge redevelopment challenges traditional and orthodox methods by inviting young people to participate in all stages of the project. It's much more than a one-off pizza and coke question session with a group of teenagers – instead it's on-going, meaningful and creative engagement.

To deliver our aims and aspirations we approached Fieldworx, a community engagement consultancy firm, to manage this complex and exciting program. Initial engagement has been achieved by The Edgy Advisors, a core group of young people that inform, critique and celebrate the key stages of the redevelopment. The approach is supported by multi-arts processes including fieldtrips, internet research, photography and film based



Brainstorming at The Edge

documentation that serves as a point of reference from which to bounce possible project ideas.

The Edgy Partners have also been developed. This is a series of interactive workshops with youth agencies, schools and alternative education agencies to engage young people from diverse backgrounds in building our understanding of what The Edge should be like, feel like and sound like.

Web 2.0 has been implemented to facilitate online engagement with young people through a State Library Wiki as well as a presence in social networking sites including Myspace, Youtube, Bebo, Flickr and Facebook.

The instigation of The Edgy Think Tank allows for educators, youth workers, arts workers, government agencies, precinct partners and other stakeholders to come together to debate and discuss the project throughout the key stages of the redevelopment. It has also been imperative to ensure that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have been invited to participate in all aspects of the consultation process.

The Edge offers young people a genuine voice at the negotiating table, showing other stakeholders the beneficial impact young people have on our work and our world.

Visit myspace.com/slq_the_edge or find The Edge on Facebook or YouTube or even view photos at The Edge Flickr account.

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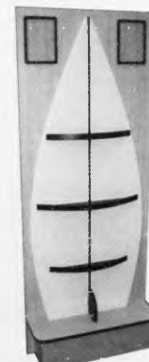
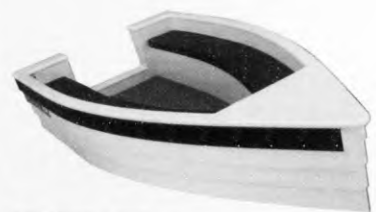
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