This is a guest blog post by Monique Akauola from Sutherland Shire Libraries. It first appeared on the Read watch play blog and appears here with permission.

When anyone is asked what do they associate with Libraries, 9 out 10 people say books. Reading is our business! So says Becky Spratford, authority on Readers Advisory and author of the blog RA for all. Becky was also the first of three stellar presenters at The NSW State Library Readers Advisory Seminar 2018. Read on to discover some of the highlights of the day. You can view presentations on the NSW Readers Advisory Wiki.

Rule number One: Never apologise for your reading tastes. This is the first of Becky Spratford’s ten rules of Basic RA. These rules were revisited in Becky’s back to basics presentation at this year’s Readers Advisory Seminar, reminding us of why Readers Advisory is a vital service in all libraries. She also shared five resources you can’t live without and reminded us to suggest don’t recommend and that reading about books is just as important as reading books.

Have you ever had a customer come up and say they are looking for a good book- and your mind goes completely blank? Becky shared tips and tricks to improve RA skills and provided a step by step guide to book talking with customers. It’s not as hard as you might think!

Our next presenter was Kat Mayo, an avid fairy killer who runs Bookthingo - a book blog with a focus on romance fiction. Kat offered some insights into the world of social media and the place of books and readers within this. She also shared why readers love social media, as well as useful and popular resources including Goodreads and Amazon. Kat shared some great tips about how to discover new pages and what to look out for.

According to our third speaker, Novelist founder and general manager, Duncan Smith, readers’ advisory is not just about putting books in people’s hands. It’s all about the conversations. Talking with customers helps us discover what the books they are reading are saying and doing for them. This helps in changing the focus from a transaction where you hand someone a book, to an embedded relationship with customers in your community.

He told us different readers want different things. Librarians are the perfect people to help readers, we just need to let customers know about our expertise, and share our knowledge – a great example is Multnomah Library’s My Librarian where you can chat with a Librarian and get reading suggestions in their areas of expertise, ranging from romance to podcasts, craft and more.

To assist you determining which services your library may find useful in helping your readers reach their reading
There were cheers in the room when Duncan announced there will be more Australian content available in Novelist now and in the future! If you would like some more training in Novelist, you can find a [Novelist Plus Overview on the Readers Advisory Wiki](http://readersadvisory.wikifoundry.com/page/2018+seminar).

The ever popular ten slides in five minutes was inspiring and interesting with a diverse range of innovative readers advisory programming and display ideas presented.

These included customers reading books to win Book Bingo at Bayside Library and attending *Shaken, Stirred, Mixed and Drunk- Famous drinks in literature* at Sutherland Library, whilst enjoying complimentary literary inspired mocktails (complete with matching swizzle sticks inspired by the NSW State Library Mocktail recipes). Northern beaches Libraries shared three of their latest undertakings including learning improvised comedy in theatre sports, going retro with gaming with the installation of a cocktail arcade table, and their Zine collection, fair and workshops.

There is lots of tweeting, pinning and posting in social media from Libraries! Library staff from Riverina Regional, Parramatta, Sutherland and Clarence Regional Libraries shared how and why they are using social media platforms as a readers advisory tool to engage their audience, promote their library programs and events, showcase collections and share news. Check out the presentation to find lots of great examples.

[Girl Scouts cookies and romance novels… This blog post](http://smartbitchestrashybooks.com/2018/01/girl-scout-cookies-romance-novels-2018-reading-eating-guide/) was the inspiration behind the final presentation of the afternoon, where attendees were invited to match books with enticing descriptions of beer and other beverages, and mouth-watering descriptions of cakes and biscuits. Thinking about your local area, are there any local businesses that you could collaborate with to create your own food, drinks and readers advisory promotion?

Don't forget you can find out more by watching any or all of the presentations from the seminar online at the [NSW Readers Advisory Wiki](http://readersadvisory.wikifoundry.com/page/2018+seminar).


**Links**

6. https://multcolib.org/my-librarian