Elizabeth (Liz) Maher
21 March, 1945 – 5 February, 2019

The Library was saddened to hear of the recent death of former Public Library Manager Elizabeth (Liz) Maher. Liz made a significant contribution to the NSW public library network during her long career at the City of Sydney and South Sydney Councils. Liz passed away after battling Motor Neurone Disease (MND) over recent years.

It is fitting that we use Liz's own words from her biography written collaboratively with her family in 2017.

“In January 1965, having left school and wanting to work in a library, I was advised to contact the City Library. I did this and my name was put on a list of candidates. I got an interview for the position of Library Assistant at the City Library and I started there on 2 August 1965.

I wanted to be a writer and I thought that working in a library would be a secure income while I wrote my creative books and what better place to inspire my writing than a library. I made some small attempts to write stories when I was about twenty years old. However life was far too exciting to sit alone and think up plots so writing as a career was well and truly put aside. As the records prove, Public Librarianship has been one of my greatest passions.

My passion was to become the Children's Librarian. Sarah Walters, the Library Manager at the City Library at the time had been a Children's Librarian and she had been on the Children's Book Council and so was very supportive of everything to do with children's library work. She gave me the independence to manage my own department.

I was involved in the International Board for Books for Young people (IBBY), an international network that was set up after World War Two to foster international understanding through children's books. Australian children got the benefit of those books when they were translated into English. I was part of the committee that organized the IBBY Children's Conferences in Australia. I was on the Children's Book Council committee and was a judge of the Children’s Book of the Year award.

When I was twenty-seven, I began my Bachelor of Arts as a mature age student at Macquarie University majoring in History and Politics. Then when I was thirty-eight I began my Masters of Library Management at the University of NSW. Both degrees were part time – challenging, but the learning and the whole University experience were worth their weight in gold to me...... simply brilliant!

I worked in the City Library from 1965 to 1993 and then [as Library Manager] at South Sydney City Library from 1994 to 2004. [I then worked at the City of Sydney as System Administrator from 2004 to 2016.] I retired from the City of Sydney Council employment on 1 August 2016 - exactly fifty-one years later!”