

## **Responses from Michelle Brennand**

Candidate for Board of Directors

### **What benefits do you believe ALIA membership can bring to a new graduate?**

The benefits are many and I only list some of them in the dot points below: -

- access to colleagues, peers, networks (both social and professional);
- professional development opportunities through the courses available (often at discounted prices for ALIA members);
- opportunities to join self nominating groups where you can again have access to colleagues but also learn how to run events, chair meetings, learn more about ALIA and its values;
- IR and HR advice through national office in matters such as wages, equity, workplace issues, particularly if you are not comfortable going to your direct supervisor or HR ;
- Access to mentor/mentoree programs (although some of these might not be ALIA exclusive);
- Building your own profile in the ALIA and therefore the professional community; and
- Contributing to YOUR association.

### **What role do you see new graduates playing in the function and direction of ALIA?**

New grads have a critical role in informing the ALIA membership (and the wider industry) of the issues facing new librarians as they join the workforce and are introduced to the challenges of employment. In doing so, they have an opportunity to shape the future direction of the Association.

There are opportunities in a range of forums for new grads to be involved and provide input eg: conference committees, advisory committees, self nominating groups, National Advisory Congress, and on the Board, as demonstrated by Kate Watson. The upcoming membership survey is another area where the new grads could get heavily involved by making sure all new ALIA new grads take the opportunity to provide feedback through this forum as well.

I think new graduates already do a great job and particularly so on the past few years where there has been a huge momentum by new grads to set up groups, build a profile, create networking and professional development opportunities. Therefore, I would say that new graduates should continue to have a role in all of these areas.

The challenge in this is how to succession plan - ie when the new grads are no longer eligible to be new grads, how does the knowledge transfer happen to the next new grads? Are you doing targeted recruiting to make sure other people take up the reins? It also interests me how new grads handle the challenge of transitioning from a new grad to a not so new grad and then becoming ineligible for that title so to speak. Do new grads then have a new cohort, do you still network with them or network separately? This would have its own challenges I would think.

## **How do you propose to engage with new graduates if you are elected to the Board?**

I already do this in a number of ways

- A new initiative is being set up at the moment by myself, Director Client Services of the State Library and Manager Libraries for the City of Joondalup - (another LGA in WA). We are launching a program on 19 May called 'stepping into management' which will be 3 sessions of 4 hours covering a range of management issues including project management, collections, budgets, resource constraints, strategic planning, public speaking, marketing and so on. We have invited guest speakers from all library sectors but also from other industries and fields to speak on these topics. Existing managers cannot attend. The aim of the program is to encourage new graduates/newly employed librarians how to get to the management level and what it is all about;
- Brown bag sessions at the local universities (not many I have to confess but have done some and another is planned for May this year);
- Continuing with my links with with GuMP WA (Graduate unemployed mentoring program) via ALIA West of which I am a committee member. GuMP convenor attends the ALIA West committee meetings and is actively supported;
- Attend student functions (eg student prize presentations - got one of these on Tuesday);
- Encourage students, graduands and newly employed ALIA members to nominate for the WA ALIA Sharr medal - an award acknowledging the most promising graduand with the greatest potential to make a difference. I am actively involved in this Award having been on the panel for the past 2 years and again a panellist this year. I have also led a review of the award to give it more profile in 2008. The review includes a recommendation that the winner sits of the Sharr Medal committee that coordinates the presentation and any reviews. This gives a new graduate exposure to the WA library community as well as some useful skills and good contacts for their future career.

My bottom line response to this question is to find ways to get new ALIA members involved asap so they experience a direct impact to becoming a member.

## **What would you do to ensure ALIA's relevance to new graduates?**

There are lots of things I can do/do do - and for that matter, that the Board can do. Note that this list is not finite.

- Make sure new grads know about all of the above so relevance is created and understood;
- Encourage new grads to get involved by inviting them onto committees (eg the Sharr Medal committee, ALIA West, GuMP as mentoree);
- Make sure the issues of new grads are represented at board level (in my case via ALIA West GuMP feedback loop);
- Create opportunities for dialogue with this unique cohort;
- Ensure professional development programs are developed specifically for this group (eg stepping into management);

- Be a mentor and coach ( have done this for the past 8 years with someone who is now a fully fledged ALIA member and is currently the Convenor of ALIA west)
- Find other mentors for new grads in WA (eg ex Board Members etc);
- Encourage ALIA to develop online collaborative tools as this is a huge means of communication for the new grad generation in particular, but also with other generations too. Note: this is already underway as a result of the Review of Advisory Groups, which I chaired;
- Work with regional WA new grads to make them feel welcome; and
- Encourage board participation at New Grad events including teleconferences. I know Kate already does this (re teleconferences) but there are many other events, too, where we could offer support via presence.

Its a bit like being a Manager with new staff. I have welcome morning teas every month, drive every new staff member around the City of Wanneroo when they arrive (the City is 658square kilometres) , and personally develop and implement the coaching programs for the senior team. Its about being in touch so you make yourself accessible and therefore, approachable.

### **Would you commit to supporting the continuation of the New Librarians' Symposium**

I think the New Librarians Symposium is a fantastic initiative and has an important place on the ALIA events calendar. However, committing to support the NLS is a whole of board decision, not just mine alone.