



Australian  
Library and  
Information  
Association

# ALIA NAC Regional Reports 2007

**Brisbane**  
**3 October 2007**

## **1. Attendance:**

Denise Cadman, Claudia Davies, Andrew Forster, Dorothy Gollner, Kathryn Harding, Kirsten Harte, Corrinne Hills, Hilary Hughes, Vicki McDonald, Andrew Osborne, Helen Partridge (Director).

## **2. Selected representative to attend the national meeting of the NAC (they must be a member)**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Andrew Osborne \_\_\_\_\_

ALIA membership no. \_\_\_\_\_ 037088 \_\_\_\_\_

## **3. Major Issues – Providing leadership in professional education and workforce planning**

### **1. What do we need to do to ensure that we have a future workforce?**

- There are lots of emails on the new grads list from new grads who are unable to find work, and yet representatives of employers at the NAC described problems getting applicants for part time work.
- New grads are finding it hard to break into the profession because there are so many experienced people applying for entry-level positions.
- Ensure we have the right skills sets, image of the profession and employers who understand the needs of the profession.
- Create volunteer and placement positions, and provide support to translate that experience into getting a job.
- Participate in careers fairs.
- TAFE example of accessing pool of retirees. They have a pool of retired folk they can call on at short notice to fill short vacancies.

### **2. What is the role of employers?**

- Employers need a range of professionals, not just librarians and technicians to satisfy the diversity of roles required in libraries etc
- Support/provide training to up-skill qualified library staff – especially the large employers
- Support unqualified library staff to become professionals
- Ensure the 'older generation' don't get left behind in terms of desirable skills
- Provide permanent positions
- Provide a career path and planning and mechanisms for part time staff to move into full time positions if desired.

- Employers should be the drivers for what skills are taught in educational institutions – employers need to tell ALIA and educational institutions what they want in their workforce.
- Support CPD for staff – a shared responsibility between staff and employer.
- Provide training through knowledge sharing by experienced staff – and share expertise others outside their organisation.

### **3. What is the role of educational institutions?**

- Provide training to up-skill qualified library staff
- Tailor courses to multiple career pathways
- Teach core skills and abilities
- Add on specialised skills as optional subjects – more electives.
- Graduate certificate courses which library staff can use to upgrade their skills or learn new skills.
- Offer building blocks – subjects or grad certs – which do not have to count towards a ‘piece of paper’ – as stepping stones throughout a career.
- Cooperation between educational institutions to offer a wider variety of subjects and specialisations.
- Keep evaluating necessary skills.

### **4. What skill set will be required in the future?**

- Libraries change and so do the necessary skills
- Skills keep expanding eg curriculum exchange – no one person can have them all!
- Generic personal transferable skills – critical thinking, flexibility, customer service
- Computer skills, web publishing
- Copyright
- Moving to enterprise content management – with library a part of the content.
- Skills for middle level managers – suitable training seems to dry up when you hit a certain level.

### **5. How do we promote the library profession as a career and attract the best people into our profession?**

- ALIA needs to be a strong voice both inside and outside the library profession
- Provide career progression, career planning.
- Libraries act as promotions. The amazing new state library has seen a large increase in applications for entry level jobs as people are excited about being a part of something that is so new and interesting.

### **6. How do we retain the best people in our profession?**

- Problem across all sectors – IT jobs are also difficult to fill now.
- Employers experience problems filling senior roles with suitably qualified and experienced professionals.
- Market the profession as cutting edge, exciting, flexible, transferability, providing work/life balance.
- Provide permanency, even for part-time positions.
- Build loyalty through supporting staff development through their career.

### **7. What do you see is ALIA’s role in these areas? How can we engage educators, employers and graduates? And other professional bodies?**

- Identify skill sets and link them to work levels.
- Show leadership on how the profession is identified – people confused as to who is qualified and who is not, especially with regards to newer titles such as information managers etc.
- Be more 'out there', feeding into people's understanding of what we do.
- Developed a clear 'persona' for the profession, and market it.
- Be a stronger voice on important, current and controversial issues affecting the profession.
- Provide support for career progression. Already have three achievable steps – CP status after 3 years, Associate Fellowship after 5 years, Fellowship after 8 years – need more, easy steps.
- Provide training to up-skill qualified library staff
- Provide a story in *inCite* on someone who has started out in part time work as a new grad and moved through different positions to become a senior, full-time worker – new grads need to actually see how it can be done.
- Promote alternative career paths eg. promote part-time work to people with young families.
- Support employers to take on students and new grads as volunteers or short placements – those networks will often lead to jobs.
- Career planning service
- Explore mentoring and PD better
- Identify what skills are needed and where you can get them from.
- There is a legislative requirement for organisations to keep records, and records managers must be qualified, yet there are no such requirements for librarians.
- Mandatory certification (like CPAs) – only need to be supportive of regional practitioners who have less access to CPD.
- Create the loop (through course accreditation) to translate what skills employers want to what the educational institutions are teaching.
- Support continuation of Gill Hallam's NEXUS project.
- Provide online, self paced learning.
- More training events like the Qld Library Techs where 3 presenters each provided specialised training to a small group.
- Act as a 'brokering agent' for making contact between members.

#### **4. ALIA Initiatives for 2008**

#### **5. Celebrating Success – ALIA stories of Achievement**

- The many activities organised by the Qld Library Technicians Group
- The Qld OPALS Group's Web 2.0 seminars
- Trivia night, Library and Information Week, organised by Quorum.
- Sarah Bennett, Brisbane North Institute of TAFE, Library Technician of the Year Award
- ALIA's stand at the Brisbane Careers and Employment Expo.

- Brisbane announced as host of the World Library and Information Congress: 75th IFLA General Conference and Council, 2010.

## **6. Local issues**

- Groups struggling to get members. Need more assistance from ALIA to identify and recruit members and onto lists. ALIA needs to communicate better with new members so that they feel comfortable getting involved – find them buddies to help them break the ice. There is a role for employers to mentor new employees including getting them connected with ALIA.
- Groups also having trouble with succession planning – getting new people onto committees. Need help with networking and marketing. Perhaps article in *inCite* on what it's like to be in a group.

## **7. Evaluation**

Opportunity to participate in, and contribute to, discussions: avg 4.3/5

Program and content: avg 4.5/5

Organisational aspects: avg 4.5/5

*What was the most valuable aspect of the regional meeting?*

- Initial meeting
- Sharing ideas – inspiring
- Discussion on professional development & education
- Being able to engage into “burning” issues and listen to new ideas
- Ability to talk directly to ALIA; benefits of discussion based feedback.  
Thanks!

*What could we do to improve the regional meeting?*

- Advise – advertise more content to be discussed ie more new grad input
- More times during year for meetings

*What other comments or suggestions do you have about the ALIA National Advisory Congress?*

- Thanks!

## **8. Any other comments from the meeting?**

ALIA would like to thank the Brisbane City Council Library service and Kathryn Harding for hosting the Brisbane NAC.