



Australian
Library and
Information
Association

ALIA NAC Regional Reports 2007

Gawler
26 September 2007

- **Attendance:**

Jill Stevens, Kimberley Hargraves, Helen Kwaka, Kate Sinclair, Elizabeth Beales, Helen Hennessy, Anne Richards, Penny Davies, Jeannine Hooper, Philip Keane

Meeting commenced at 6:30pm

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

Name: _____ Kimberley Hargrave

ALIA membership no. _____ 049759

- **Discussion topic: Providing leadership in professional education and workforce planning**

- **What is role of employers?**

- Employers need to be aware of what is available and assist by stating what they need in a future workforce. Relevancy /accessibility to courses for staff is crucial – managers need to understand how a staff members' role fits within the organisational structure and the importance of communicating with stakeholders.
- There is a trend in employing non-qualified library staff but who have skills in other areas that we can utilise. Some state/federal government bodies don't require library qualifications. It was agreed this is not always necessary for senior management positions.
- What level of training should be provided by employers? For library technicians, conflict resolution/ supervisory skills should be compulsory not an elective!
- Employers restrict staff training to those skills that are necessary to meet the organisation's current business goals. They are not always proactive in developing skills for the future of the organisation or the careers of those individuals so that they continue in the library field.

- **What is the role of educational institutions?**

- Students need to encouraged diversity – some broad subjects and others more specialised.
- UniSA starting to pull in good, well respected library practitioners for lecturing/tutoring but we need to remember that librarians are a respected profession and that qualifications are seen as a

necessary component of that status. TAFE is also developing subjects that have work experience components so that graduates have practical experience with their first job.

- **What skill set will be required in the future?**
 - Library Managers are looking for diverse staff with broad skills such as negotiations with suppliers, providers; managing service-level agreements; strategic planning; project management; general systems administration skills; customer service skills. It was agreed that strategic planning skills may be achieved through a combination of formal studies and life experiences.
 - Personal attributes for library staff need to be factored in. It was suggested that we consider the option of models/mentors for students to work with so that they can measure themselves against those individuals and the high level of professionalism required/expected in the library field. The existing mentoring program works with those already in the profession – this needs to be extended to work with library students.
- **How do we promote the library profession as a career and attract the best people into our profession?**
 - Need to establish a marketing campaign to promote the profession and supply a promotional pack to groups which can be used at the grassroots level
 - Establish a mentor program between practicing professionals already in the field and library studies students
- **How do we retain the best people in our profession?**
 - Through professional development as discussed in the points above.
- **What do you see is ALIA's role in these areas? How can we engage educators, employers and graduates? And other professional bodies?**
 - ALIA needs to market the profession better.
 - Teacher librarian status. We need to start working with schools/school boards in appreciating the status of librarians or nothing will change. Librarians are professionally equivalent to teachers but there is a need to raise the profile of these staff – this push needs to come from the teacher librarian network in the first instance. ALIA's School Library section is not seen by teacher librarians as relevant at this point.
 - Collaboration between public & school libraries needs to continue. Noted that there is now a MOU between ALIA and ASLA. A strategic planning session was completed last year but no follow up has been done since then. ALIA needs to keep the momentum going. We need to look at the skills that Teacher Librarians bring to the profession and see how they can be used by others, i.e. curricula; understanding of children; professional teaching skills. Cooperation with public library staff will help Teacher Librarians overcome some of the negatives of their roles in schools such as isolation; heavy workloads and fractional (part-time) employment.
 - Course accreditation. Would like to see ALIA become more consultative in that process with members about what they want students to achieve.

- **ALIA Initiatives for 2008**
 - Boardroom Bound
 - Helen – member of 'Women on Boards' Association. Start to use professional skills to become more proactive.
 - Review of advisory committees and representatives
 - Technology: what members want from ALIA
 - Teleconference capabilities so that staff who missed meeting can listen to wav file later. Agreed that this would be valuable but it was noted that regional staff still like to get together where possible
 - Sharing templates through tools such as Yahoo groups, etc. would help

- **Celebrating Success – ALIA stories of Achievement**
 - NetAlert/Filtering – pleasing to see that ALIA is maintaining a professional presence on this issue and handling the political issues well.
 - Collaboration / networking proving to be valuable for regional members

- **Concerns and Local issues**
 - Would like to see ALIA approach senior library management for assistance or advice if the need arises. It was felt that SALIN utilises the skills and knowledge their members more effectively. Noted that South Australian groups do not have access to membership details and this is an issue in communicating effectively with all local members.
 - With more non-qualified staff being employed in the profession, what can we offer them that will make them join? It was felt that they do not see a place for themselves in ALIA even though there are multiple levels of membership available.
 - Institutional recognition in ALIA (and PLA) was not felt to be strong with it being unclear what either organisation did for its members. We need better connections / sense of belonging to these bodies.
 - ALIA-SA could help to improve regional links through more workshops in regional areas – perhaps in conjunction with other library sector (ASLA / PLA / TAFE) meetings.

- **Evaluation**

Opportunity to participate in, and contribute to, discussions: avg 5/5
 Program and content: avg 4/5
 Organisational aspects: avg 4/5

What was the most valuable aspect of the regional meeting?

- An opportunity to be informed directly about issues and to participate in dialogue with others about these issues. The interactivity of the event was important.
- Not having to travel too far! Networking with colleagues, stimulating discussion

What could we do to improve the regional meeting?

- Perhaps flag issues to be discussed before hand to allow opportunity for thinking about them in advance
- Later time (or do the workshop after the NAC), more substantial food (but what was provided was great)

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

- One of the aspects that made the Gawler one so successful was that it was a small group of people participating. I don't know how effectively larger groups would work and if with a larger group there may be the need for more structure ie. how long people can speak for? Frankly, I thought the Gawler experience was very worthwhile
- Continue having them in regional areas, esp Gawler.

• **Any other comments from the meeting?**

No

Meeting completed at 7:50pm