



Australian
Library and
Information
Association

ALIA NAC Regional Report: Hobart Meeting, 24th September 2007, 5:30-7:30 pm, Morris Miller Library, University of Tasmania

1. Attendance:

Frances Coll, Meredith Hepburn, Leonie Atkins, Ann Alderslade, Sally Murdoch, Jo Beck, Jen Johnson, Karmen Pemberton, Heather Jones, Jane Jeppson (ALIA LLO Tas) , Roxanne Missingham (ALIA National President)

2. Selected representative to attend the national meeting of the NAC

Sally Murdoch

Name: _____

042532

ALIA membership no: _____

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

*Teaching of cataloguing in librarianship courses in a rapidly changing/ever evolving online environment was seen as important and needing to keep pace. Principles of information organisation are required to be taught as a core subject and we need to ensure that it is addressed more widely than just traditional cataloguing – need to go beyond AACR2r, Library of Congress Subject Headings, Dewey Decimal Classification system, MARC 21 formats, etc. In addition, the cataloguing of Internet resources must be included and related topics such as metadata, Dublin Core, FRBR, etc. One of the issues raised was whether it might be possible for courses to give students a solid theoretical foundation on the principles of information organisation which they could flexibly apply once they start working.

*Need to develop, encourage and foster a research culture and ethos in the profession and share this research.

*Need for evidence based learning.

*It's not possible for all courses to offer all things to all people (i.e. its not realistic for all of the different institutions to provide all of the different specialities) so more flexibility in design and delivery of courses across the country could be worth exploring. By way of example, each institution could teach a particular speciality (or more than one if feasible) thereby giving students the ability to 'mix and match' across courses and enable a more tailored approach to education for the profession to meet specialised needs.

*More Graduate Certificate Courses to enable staff to specialise, e.g. offer Graduate Certificates in Cataloguing, Legal Resources, Reference and Information Services, etc – like the model used by the nursing profession.

*There's a lot to cover in a one year Graduate Diploma course so we may need to consider whether entry level to the profession should be a Masters degree - as in many other countries (although expectations for increased salaries may then occur).

*Undergraduate degrees in librarianship– the value of the undergraduate degree was considered and discussed. The offering of undergraduate courses was seen as an important social justice issue as they provide a less costly way of facilitating access to education for the profession for many students. Cost of courses is a significant issue. Undergraduate degrees also offer Library Technicians a pathway

to librarianship (in Tasmania it was noted that approximately 1/3 of Library Technician students articulate to librarianship).

*Librarianship remains a female dominated profession – demands of working full-time and studying have an adverse impact on families & lifestyle and many women choose not pursue senior and executive level careers for this reason. More flexibility in employment practices is required so that short-term/part-time opportunities in senior roles can be facilitated – so that it's not seen as a 'life sentence'.

*Part-time work needs to be viewed as serious work and more opportunities at senior and executive level need to be available. Part-time work needs to be available to enable the aging workforce to transition to retirement.

*Risks and benefits of non-library managers leading library organisations were discussed. Importance of management and leadership education and training must be advocated – 'we must lead or we will be led'!

*Benefits of rotating positions at entry level to facilitate new librarians' exposure to different aspects of professional work. The State Library of Tasmania recently filled 4 Librarian level 1 positions and each appointee will rotate through each of the 4 positions in different areas. This is an excellent model.

*'PD for life' – we need to foster this attitude in our profession.

*Short courses are an important part of PD. On-line courses like FOLIOZ are great because they enable a flexible approach to learning but they must be advertised over a longer period to enable prospective participants to have sufficient time to plan and organise their time to undertake them.

*ALIA/CAVAL partnership is a great concept but better targeting of courses is needed. It's really important that we respond to CAVAL's annual calls for expression of interest so they know what we want! There is perhaps an opportunity to approach the ALIA/CAVAL partnership arrangement more holistically so that courses overall run at profit rather than every state being required to make a profit. There are greater opportunities to maximise profits in the larger markets which could then help to subsidise/off set costs in the smaller markets and make training available to all members across the country on a more secure/consistent basis. Throughout this year some courses in the smaller markets have sometimes been under threat of cancellation if they haven't received a similar number of registrations as the larger markets.

*'Innovation' – the skill of being able to innovate – was seen by the meeting as a critical skill for our profession. People need to be sharing in *inCite* what they are doing (e.g. how they are using Second Life) so others are aware and can ask the questions: 'Is this useful?' 'How can I use it?' We need to get people excited about what we are doing in our various libraries and to understand what it does for our users!

*Need more Library 2.0 events and training - the '23 Things' programme developed by the Public Library of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County was seen as something that all libraries could adopt!

*Gen X and Gen Y librarians have a different approach – many don't see themselves as staying in libraries. Library skill set is transferable outside libraries. So conversely, we may therefore have to look to other professions and attract them to libraries. Need to identify what those professions are.

*More emphasis needs to be placed on attracting people with the 'right' attributes. They need to love people, innovation, technology & learning and they must be creative, curious, inquiring and have a very strong customer service ethic. We need to start 'sifting' at school level when they first approach us for work experience - if they think libraries are nice quiet places and they love reading then perhaps this is not the career for them and we need to be honest with them at that point!

*Workshopping when recruiting is an innovative way of selecting staff - e.g. of the Manukau Public Library in New Zealand was given.

*Traditional position descriptions were viewed by the meeting as restrictive and old fashioned – we need to be far more eye catching when advertising our positions and not focus on the tasks/processes

4. ALIA Initiatives for 2008

- **Boardroom Bound**

* Meeting agreed that this was a much needed initiative. A half day workshop/ satellite event each year in conjunction with the regional NAC meetings was suggested as a cost-effective way of running the programme/attracting interest.

*Mentoring of potential board members was also seen by the meeting as beneficial.

- **Review of advisory committees and representatives**

*Meeting agreed that this review had resulted in a satisfactory outcome.

*Establishment of a Retirees Advisory Group was welcomed.

- **Technology: what members want from ALIA**

*More forums for sharing of information and discussion such as wikis and blogs.

*More on-line learning opportunities, e.g FOLIOZ – but a longer lead up time for advertising is necessary to ensure potential participants can plan in advance to make the commitment.

5. Celebrating Success – ALIA stories of Achievement

The ongoing success of the ALIA Tasmania mentoring program was nominated by Heather Jones and subsequently selected by the meeting as the story to take to the national NAC meeting.

ALIA Tasmania mentoring program

Last year saw a continuation of the very successful facilitated mentoring program established by the ALIA Tasmania Group in 2004.

The process is as follows:

- The program is open to qualified librarians and library technicians, who must be ALIA members
- Following a call for expressions of interest in participating in the program partnerships are facilitated by a sub-committee comprising Linda Luther, University Librarian, University of Tasmania; Jane Jeppson, ALIA Local Liaison Officer Tasmania; plus one mentee and one mentor who have participated in a previous program.
- A training and orientation session, led by Linda Luther enables each partnership to formulate an agreement on desired outcomes, recorded on a contract signed by the two parties and submitted to the sub-committee.
- In a series of regular meetings the mentor provides a sounding board, advice and/or practical assistance, while the mentee contributes fresh ideas and approaches.
- At the conclusion of the program a meeting of the sub-committee and all participants is held to evaluate the success of each partnership and the program overall.

At the time I participated in the program I was working in a special library. My mentee was a trained technician, retraining as a librarian. He was managing a collection which was part of a special library. I advised on library issues, knowledge management and occasionally assignments, while he introduced me to a number of technological innovations and a fresh new perspective. I found the experience invaluable.

Heather Jones

Other stories include:

*The opening of the University of Tasmania Library's Learning Hubs (with 24/7 access to reference and information services and the reserve collection to commence soon).

*The opening of the new Learning Centre at TAFE Tasmania's Hobart Campus

*The integration of the Glenorchy Online Access Centre and the Glenorchy Library, now called the Glenorchy Library and Online Access Centre

*High levels of activity and participation in all 4 ALIA Groups in Tasmania, enabling a mix of events to be accessed by members across the State. Each group has developed, planned, organised and delivered high quality programmes this year and the committees of each of the groups is thanked for their voluntary commitment for the benefit of all.

* Rebecca Evans – recipient of the national Library Technician of the Year Award 2006 and awarded the Dunn and Wilson Scholarship 2007.

* Twila Ann Janssen Herr Award - offered for the first time in 2006.

6. Local issues

The major local issue is the inadequate staffing of school libraries in Tasmania. Pressure needs to be applied to the Tasmanian Education Department and Tasmanian Government to effect a change in policy to ensure qualified teacher-librarians are employed in all Tasmanian Schools.

Currently, the employment of specialist staff such as teacher-librarians, LOTE teachers, art teachers, drama teachers, etc is at the discretion of the School Principal. The size of the school population is not a determinant in whether or not a teacher-librarian (part-time or full-time) must be employed. Library Technicians or Teacher Aides are frequently employed by schools to operate and maintain school libraries. This restricts the number of children who can be supervised at any one time in the library without a teacher present. Furthermore, anecdotally, low information literacy skills are evident in students as they progress to higher education.

While ALSA Tasmania has raised this issue directly with School Principals the meeting recommended that ALIA and ASLA at the national level should jointly lobby the Tasmanian Department of Education and the Tasmanian Government to effect a change of policy.

7. Evaluation

Forms sent under separate cover.

8. Any other comments from the meeting?

None.