



Australian
Library and
Information
Association

ALIA NAC Regional Reports 2007

Thursday 13th September. Chair: Derek Whitehead

1. **Attendance:**

Derek Whitehead – Chair
Margie Anderson – LLO, note taker
Mary Ayling
Ian Smith
Ebe Kartus
Michelle Thomason
Kay Steel
Rachel Salmon
Rebecca Parker
Deirdre Gillespie
Kerrie Ludekins
Moyra McAllister
Daniel Giddens
Gail Schmidt
Chris Kelly

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

Name: Rebecca Parker _____

ALIA membership no. 057216 _____

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

- Discussion focussed on the need to attract a higher calibre of applicant to the industry and to encourage students to see the LIS profession and more demanding, dynamic and rewarding than is currently the perception.
- There was a great deal of discussion about the appropriateness of the skills being taught in the LIS learning institutions and the job readiness of those who graduate. There is concern that new graduates are not being equipped with the skills or experience they require to take on successful roles.
- LIS courses are seen to be concentrating on preparing students for careers in information management within the business sector not other areas of librarianship.
- The brand of “the library” is still the best we have to sell our industry. Moving away from using this term has done little to attract more usage or increase the perceived value of what we do.
- There is a dire shortage of Children’s librarians and teacher librarians. Why are we not training more of them?
- There is not enough contact with ALIA and the professional in general whilst students are undertaking their studies in the field. Members would like to see more fieldwork opportunities, more cadetship, more traineeship, more contact with ALIA staff and programs and a greater level of recognition of ALIA within the course structure.
- There is a lack of understanding about how the ALIA accreditation of courses works and a feeling that it is ineffective and need to have a great impact on the subjects being taught.

- LIS learning institutions seem to be disproportionately flavoured by the School they reside in. Eg A business focus if within the school of Business, an IT focus if within the IT faculty. This puts the LIS component of the course at risk of being out of sync with what the industry really needs.
- There is disenchantment from new graduates that they cannot find suitably challenging positions.

Role of employers

- Employers need to be more vocal about what kinds of skills they require.
- Employers need to be proactive about providing training for workers to enable them to meet their changing job requirements.
- Senior staff need to support ALIA more and develop a culture that values ALIA participation.
- Senior staff need to value the ALIA PD scheme and reward employees and applicants for participating in it. This will give the scheme more value.
- Employers need to look at giving people the opportunity to move from one sector of the LIS industry to another and recognise valuable genetic skills.
- There need to be higher levels of job rotation, secondment and mentoring.
- Employers need to give students more meaningful work experience placements and assist in providing better fieldwork opportunities.
- Employers need to push to decision makers the value of their services so that more funds are made available for salaries.

Skills required for the future

- IT, IT, IT. Staff need to be IT savvy and be able to pick up or discard new products rapidly.
- Cataloguing skills will be even more highly valued in the future as the amount of cataloguing being taught in Librarianship courses is diminishing and thus creating a shortage in the industry of people with good cataloguing skills. Conversely, employers are not recognising the high level of cataloguing skills possessed by Library Technicians. The lack of cataloguing skills was seen to be a major problem for our industry as this is one of the key skills that sets us apart from other professions.
- The ability to blend electronic media with traditional library services.
- Presentation and training skills. The key to the longevity of the LIS industry lies in our ability to sell ourselves as trainers so that we can educate users in how to master their information needs.
- Staff at every level in the LIS industry will require a high level of personal and written/electronic communication skills. This is seen as a key skill and must be articulated to those looking at entering the industry as a primary requirement.
- The ability to be self motivated to learn new skills and products and to be able to transfer that knowledge quickly to other services and other situations.
- The ability to work in fluid teams and to manage successful working relationship with people who have varying styles. To be able to combine Baby boomer workers with Gen X and Gen Y and beyond.

Retaining high quality staff

- The LIS industry needs to be paid more money we cannot compete with other industries that require similar levels of education.
- We need to be able to articulate a clear career pathway for people seeing advancement.
- The industry needs to be able to offer excellent working conditions to make up for the lack of salary. Flexible work hours, opportunities to study,
- Staff entering the industry need to be made clearly aware of what roles and tasks we undertake. Most students, their parents or careers advisors have no real idea what a library worker does.

Working with other professional bodies

- Not discussed at this meeting

4. ALIA Initiatives for 2008

Boardroom Bound

- The meeting saw this as a positive step by ALIA.

Review of advisory committees and representatives

- Attendees want to see more consultation with ALIA members and volunteers.

Technology: what members want from ALIA

- Greater use of electronic media to facilitate professional development activities.
- Access to electronic journals in the LIS industry. Many members do not have access to journals within their own organisation unless they happen to work for one of the learning institutions teaching LIS studies. Access to journals is seen as critical in order to maintain professional reading.
- An easier to use web site.
- Access to any product that will make it easier for local Groups to perform and to assist in facilitating events.
- Online booking and receipts for ALIA events.

5. Celebrating Success – ALIA stories of Achievement

- Not discussed at this meeting except to say that Victoria is one of the most active states with regard to ALIA participation.

6. Local issues

- Members feel that ALIA is well regarded in Victoria and a high level of motivation for success is present.
- There is a concern that a small number of ALIA volunteers will become burnt out and that we need to recruit more members to committees etc.
- Local Groups need to liaise more so that they can share information about planned events.

7. Evaluation

Attendees at the meeting gave positive feedback. They would have liked to have seen more participants and more publicity for the event. Feedback forms are attached.

8. Any other comments from the meeting?

- Committee members feel constrained by lack of available financial support from ALIA to facilitate PD activities.
- Members feel that their long term experiences with ALIA and as managers need to be recognised and utilised by ALIA to assist in planning and running the association.
- ALIA needs to make sure that at all times they projects a 12 century image of the profession and support members to embrace cutting edge technologies and attitudes.
- ALIA needs to support and encourage research based practise within the industry.

Margie Anderson

ALIA Local Liaison Officer – Victoria