



Australian
Library and
Information
Association

ALIA NAC Regional Reports 2007

Perth Regional NAC Meeting Minutes of the Meeting held on the 8th October 2007 at the UWA Staff Room, Reid Library

The meeting was opened at 5.30pm by Michelle Brennand, Director.

1. Present

See separate Attendance Sheet.

2. Apologies

Imogen Garner
Liz Burke
Jill Benn

3. NAC Representative Nomination

Alissa Sputore accepted the position of NAC Representative.

4. NAC Report

4.1 *Why do we have the NAC?*

Comments were invited from attendees on how well or otherwise the NAC works and why they attended.

Comments received about why they attended included:

- Come out of a sense of guilt
- Come to show support for the Association
- Come to find out what it is about

Comments received about how well or otherwise the NAC works included:

- Endorse the “one topic” approach, otherwise too many items on agenda. NAC Agendas are normally too complex and overly formal.
- Reporting outcomes of NAC to members is not good by the Association

- The name (ie: NAC) is misleading and off putting. Many people assume it that it does not apply to them as a “Congress” sounds very high level and not something a “member” would be interested in attending.
- Call it the “Tell us what you think” meeting instead
- Make the NAC more of a discussion, rather than a regimented meeting.
- Make them more often, perhaps quarterly. This would make them shorter and the one topic approach would be easier to achieve.
- Single topics – make it short and simple.
- The NAC is too formal in structure.
- There is a need to encourage active participation and communication with members.
- Setting the dates for an NAC well in advance is appreciated.
- Need to make sure that everyone knows what ALIA is doing.

5. General Discussion – Member Concerns, General Comments

At this stage the meeting was opened up for members to address questions or concerns that they may have to an ALIA Director.

One question raised was regarding membership statistics and the Director took this opportunity to discuss the 2% target and the initiative to recruit more institutional members

Comments: It was also raised that previously there has been a \$250 subsidy available for membership recruitment by Groups.

Action: WA Local Liaison Officer to follow this up with National Office.

Comments: It was suggested that the NAC meetings are held during work hours, so employers can encourage staff to attend as part of their professional development. It was also noted that many CPD opportunities are held during working hours.

6. “Provide Leadership in Professional Education and Workforce Planning.” (Part 1B on the Agenda)

The Director introduced the topic and made people aware of the Background documents and then opened the meeting for discussion.

Comments: What is our workforce comprised of? How is this information tracked ie: statistics.

Data collection for our profession is poor; we have little knowledge of the demographics of the industry. It was suggested that we lobby to have the demographics tracked in National data collecting sites.

The Director made mention of the NEXUS project and the proposed Membership Survey which would ask some of these questions but would only target ALIA members not the profession as a whole.

It was observed that ALIA needs to keep graduate data, for example information from institutions such as Curtin University, ECU and TAFE consisting of such things as how many graduates there were and in what fields did they graduate?

The point was made that there is a very large gap in understanding between Academia and students. This was raised in response to the observation that much of Academia perceives that students are not interested or willing to attend functions to find out more about the profession or the Association. The suggestion was raised that perhaps ALIA could sponsor a social event, for example, a Christmas Sundowner.

Another suggestion raised was with regards to the ALIA prize. In previous years apparently there was a prize for the best student which consisted of a one year ALIA membership and some money. It was raised that in this way ALIA or a representative of the profession could present the prize and have an opportunity to address the students.

The comment was also made that an event which was aimed at “those who want a job in the industry, come and meet the industry” may encourage both students and Institutions to form ties.

Other suggestions for engaging students included doing more things online as the change in students Education Environment makes things like blogs, Web CT and Second Life more appealing and targeted.

It was also observed that the profession needs to start educating and promoting itself to students much earlier, even high school and primary school. This would also assist with changing the image of Information Professionals to something more positive. Something similar to the Adopt a School, Adopt a Minesite program that was run years ago but it would involve adopting a public library.

Comments regarding how the Universities are attracting students focused on how we could utilize the expos and career counsellors. The point was made that to attend these sorts of functions a good supply of handouts (that are attractive to students and possibly other give aways would need to be sourced.)

Q6 What is the role of ALIA in these areas?

Comments: The discussion on this point focused on getting ALIA to produce a series of FAQ which demonstrate the value of Libraries and Librarians. This would include examples of facts and figures that affect the “bottom line” of institutions. Exactly how Information Professionals have contributed, this is

especially relevant now with the mining boom in WA and how professionals have proven their skills.

It was also suggested that ALIA could be the driver in getting some solid statistical information on why Libraries and Information Professionals are so good. The suggestion was made that this is done via the ABS as they would already have much of this information.

The comment was also made that ALIA should invest more in marketing, promotional materials that could be used to promote the profession. An example being a fact sheet on what is so good about being an Information Professional?

Q1 What is the Role of Employers?

Comments:

That we somehow get employers involved in writing and suggesting ideas for the Curriculum that students are being taught. Involve key people on these committees in conjunction with peak bodies such as CAUL, CASL and WALGLA.

Another suggestion which was voiced was that the employer role is actually to assist with the performance appraisal process and key performance indicators as well as actively supporting staff to attend events and meetings. The employer should also be encouraged to embrace the ethos of being part of a professional association and in consequence pass this onto the employees.

The issue of continuous education and recognition in the profession was also raised. With the model of the UK Association (CILIP) and their chartership program. Again it was suggested that Information Professionals are continually challenged and encouraged to undertake CPD in order to stay a recognized Associate member. In this regard it would be the employer who would provide the opportunities to do this. This would assist the profession gain additional credibility.

However, the comment was made that the PD program that is currently run by ALIA is very good, but needs much more marketing to encourage people to make the most of it.

A member put forward the suggestion that there should be significant membership discounts for those participating in the CPD program.

Other suggestions and comments included that we really need to do more to improve and acknowledge that it is important for Library Staff to do CPD and when it is completed some sort of recognition from the organization (perhaps a letter to the immediate boss) would also help make it more meaningful for staff. It was thought that looking at how other industries do this (mining industry) would be a good starting point.

The issue was then raised that the Members Survey although a good idea is missing the non ALIA members and it was suggested that a survey is also designed and distributed (perhaps via local lists) to non members.

Q4 Skill Set

Comments: It was commented that you definitely need to be more than an expert user now and more IT awareness is a must this more in the form of applied IT skills. These especially so that professionals can be clear about directing projects and knowing what we need to have happen (ie: directing pure IT professionals).

Attendees could see more use for a IT/IM hybrid, but acknowledged that it would be very difficult to get the IT / Librarian mix right.

Other skills deemed important were information analysis, website skills (ie: programming, html), SFX and so on. Also made mention were things like leadership and management skills, advocacy and marketing.

It was suggested that different “streams” of Librarianship were explored in order to make the most of people’s skills and interests. The example given was of nurses who may specialize in Clinical, Research or Management streams.

The comment was made that not many people want to “manage” as the responsibility and work / life balance make this choice no longer so attractive. However many people are still interested in Leadership as a topic as the Leading Libraries event showed and it was agreed that this sort of event was a definite positive step. This, as well as the LIANZA Leadership Forum which showed how being involved in the Association (LIANZA) helped some professionals contribute to their management and leadership goals.

It was perceived as important that we, including the Association are there to assist those non managers who want to make the jump into management and the topic of mentoring was then explored.

Q4, 5 How do we promote and retain people?

Comments: Much more involvement in Career Expos. Revive the Star Profiles and use these to attract and celebrate Information Professionals who are achieving excellence.

It was suggested that Sharr Medallists are profiled to find out what and where they are now and perhaps they should be required to take a more active part in the promotion of the profession.

A fact sheet on what you need to do to become a Librarian – make it very simple and easy.

A fact sheet on the diversity of the role needs to be advertised and explained, again with plenty of marketing.

Writing more articles for the Alumni magazines was another avenue to be explored.

7. Education Summit 2008

Information about this summit was highlighted and the Director encouraged all attendees to give feedback.

Comments: Make sure that it is not a “talk fest” but a meeting that will achieve definite outcomes and results. It was also suggested that scene setting papers are distributed before the summit and a blog set up so people can easily give feedback. Then the actual meeting can be more of a closed session in order to achieve the definite outcome. Perhaps you could even blog a topic a month. It was noted that the Issues Papers would need to be released very soon.

PART 2

8. Boardroom Bound

The Director explained the initiative copies of the flyer were distributed.

9. Review of Advisory Committees and Representatives

The Director outlined the progress that has been made including the response rates and stated that guidelines will be created for groups which will be reviewed in two years time.

Comments: A member raised the issue of the changes to the Constitution which had been proposed last year. The Director stated that these had been voted on and rejected. From this came the comment that ALIA needs to develop the capacity for online voting and the Director advised that this is on track for 2009.

Concerns about very low attendance at AGM's was raised and the fact that low attendance means that decisions are not representative of the membership. It was suggested that the date of the Conference be changed. (not September).

PART 3

Celebrating Success

It was agreed that the Leading Libraries event would be nominated as the WA initiative..

Part 4

Local Issues

ALIAWest committee nominations for Convenor. As there were no nominations, it was agreed to hand this back to the current Convenor to progress.

Action: Liz Burke to progress and get nominations.

It was agreed that the revived ALIAWest committee has done a fantastic job and had a very successful year with well attended events.

The meeting closed at 7.15pm.