



Australian
Library and
Information
Association

ALIA NAC Regional Reports 2007

1. Attendance:

Graham Black, Claudia Davies (ALIA LLO), Jennifer Doak, Karli Downey, Chelsea Harper, Cheryl Haughton, Jo Keleher, Margaret Lamb, Lorraine Lowcock, Kerrie Malcolm, Debbie Orr, Samantha Rannard, Vicki Roberts, Kate Watson (ALIA Director).

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

Name: Jo Keleher

ALIA membership no: 056466

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?

- Attract new people to the profession, especially people who want to stay in the Rockhampton region. Lots of young people want to move to the big cities (universal problem for all professions).
- Promote an understanding of the profession and what a librarian is.
- Broaden name to encompass technical aspects of the job
- More promotion of the portability of skills – able to travel overseas with qualifications (attracts young people). "Have LIS, will travel"

2. What is the role of employers?

- To support employees
- Try to forecast requirements of the profession 5-10 years out
- To provide a "cadetship" style of training on the job
- Help prospective recruits experience what it is like – "get it out there"
- Change the image of librarians in schools
- Be at careers fairs – but no point targeting school students

3. What is the role of educational institutions?

- People suited to the profession don't necessarily know one can gain qualifications externally – or where to look.
- Attendees were interested in knowing statistics on the intakes to courses – percentage of mature aged students
- Concern expressed at the reduced number of undergraduate degree courses in librarianship.

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

- Different to current skill set
- People skills as well as technical skills
- Allow for specialisations to attract people – readers advisory, cataloguing

- Cataloguing more important in the future
- Attitudes more important than skills – willingness to be mentored and learn, be part of your institution etc

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

- In competition with other degrees, particularly IT, education, communication and marketing, hospitality – we need to poach them!
- Emphasise strong sense of justice and empathy of the profession.
- Get away from attracting people who just love books (poor understanding of what we do)
- Get better at stating what we do
- We limit ourselves by requiring qualifications. Take National Library example of selecting the best people with the right attitude and then training them.
- Children's and young peoples librarians have a role in setting a positive role model and fostering love of libraries.

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

- Pay equity – secondary school teachers earn more than librarians – though it was acknowledged that many people are not driven by the pay
- Typical salaries are low for such a large investment in education (post-graduate qualifications)
- Low salaries will attract people who 'settle' for the profession – not the best and brightest.
- Provide permanent positions
- Give them a reason to stay – continual change and opportunities
- Career path and promotion
- Mentoring and support
- Opportunities to move out into broader areas using the same skills eg council services
- More movement between sectors such as from public to academic

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

- "Fix" the image of librarians
- NSW test case should be run in other jurisdictions
- There should be a "regional twist" to all ALIA policies and marketing etc – consider us.
- Support staff development through improved access to professional development.
- Enable events in regions – webcasts, podcasts etc not the same as being there. Or intersperse local training with web-based training.
- Produce material for regional libraries to use at careers fairs.
- Attract second career librarians
- Work with employers to provide training opportunities such as technology courses
- Support interactions between regional groups
- ALIA e-prints and publishing important. Most people preferred *inCite* in print, but they wanted the option to just get it electronically.
- The *Australian Library Journal* should be available electronically, and be free to members. It should be archived in repositories with an embargo period. The ALJ and AARL are scholarly journals vital to the profession. They should be indexed – otherwise no motivation to publish!
- ALJ and AARL should have refereed and non-refereed articles to popularise them.

- Need ALJ website including contents and abstracts so web crawlers index the journal – make it more visible.
- We need to lift our game (as a profession) with respect to publishing research. We need to publish more broadly – in IT, education journals etc

4. ALIA Initiatives for 2008

- Boardroom Bound
- Review of advisory committees and representatives
- Technology: what members want from ALIA
 - Provide toolkits eg book week.
 - Develop website for external users e.g. develop pages of topic of interest such as web 2.0 – one would expect to find information on this topic on ALIA's website.
 - Provide wikis etc to showcase what's going on. For example, minutes of meetings and closed spaces where files can be shared.
 - Conference technology eg. Pay-per-view speakers at Information Online as new revenue stream.
 - Courses in technology
 - Podcasts, videostreaming

5. Celebrating Success – ALIA stories of Achievement

- Libbie Blanchard and Joanne Keleher's paper at the ALIA New Librarians' Symposium, Sydney, December 2006
- Various papers published by Chelsea Harper as a result of her Ray Choate Scholarship in 2005
- 3 Gold medal mentors (Debbie Orr, Cheryl Haughton, Sandra Cochrane) nominated by ALIA New Graduates as part of the New Grad Gold Medal Coach ceremony at ALIA Click 06 Conference.
- ALIA's 70th birthday celebrations held at Central Queensland University.
- Graham Black (mentor) and Chelsea Harper (participant) successfully participated in the Aurora Leadership Institute
- Rockhampton celebrates it's continuing presence and vibrancy in the library community.
- Rockhampton Council Libraries 'Library Week' write up in *inCite*.

6. Local issues

- Regional problem of the high percentage of females in the profession – with the need for dual incomes, their partners' transfers affect their ability to stay in Rockhampton.
- CQ is not *perceived* as an attractive destination
- Regional library staff don't believe that metropolitan librarians understand at all the difficulties in regional areas
- There are very few applicants for any job.
- Able to get broader experience in regional areas than in metropolitan libraries.

7. Evaluation

Opportunity to participate in, and contribute to, discussions: avg 4.75/5

Program and content: avg 4.5/5

Organisational aspects: avg 4.4/5

What was the most valuable aspect of the regional meeting?

- Discussing region-specific issues within an ALIA context
- Learning what is happening in ALIA, socialising with librarians from other libraries
- Cross sector sharing
- Being able to participate and contribute suggestions
- Listening and learning about CQ region – networking
- Sharing of ideas
- Interest in local opinion
- The fact that it was held here in the region. More please!
- Opportunity to participate in a contribute [sic] to ALIA! Opportunity to meet ALIA personnel. I believe some excellent feedback was presented and if some of the ideas could be put into practice, ALIA would really be providing wonderful support and service to the librarianship profession.
- Opportunity to learn more about ALIA
- It was here! A great open forum.

What could we do to improve the regional meeting?

- Happen more often
- More regular/frequent meetings, professional development, key speakers etc as a draw card
- Continue to offer opportunities for members and non ALIA people to be involved
- Focus on regional issues, great to be able to offer input, brainstorming with group
- More regular frequency.

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

- It has been god to see ALIA actively encouraging regional participation – looking forward to seeing the outcomes

8. Any other comments from the meeting?

ALIA would like to thank Debbie Orr, Jo Keleher, and Central Queensland University for organising the Rockhampton NAC.