



Australian
Library and
Information
Association

ALIA NAC Regional Reports 2008

Gold Coast, Qld, Thursday 17 July, Nerang Branch Library,
Gold Coast City Council, Nerang

1. Attendance:

Helen Partridge (Chair / ALIA Director), Claudia Davies (minutes), Sarah Thorning, Rhonda Middleton, Gail Parr, Peta Hopkins, Leona Jennings, Christine Steeden, Marian Morgan-Bindon, Joy Webster, Naida Tattersall, Kate Davis, Dianne Glasson.

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

Name: _____ Gail Parr _____

ALIA membership no. _____ 047803 _____

3. Review of Education and Workforce Summit outcomes

See PowerPoint slides

4. Discussion topic: *Staying smart in a complicated world - professional development*

The meeting commenced with an open discussion.

- Finding and identifying courses in library studies not easy – especially for overseas students
- 6-7 years ago there was lots of PD but groups don't seem to be so active now. Events included guest speakers such as Peter Pal and Alan Bundy, and some lively debates were held.
- not many local opportunities for informal PD – requires some key enthusiastic organisers to drive it
- some local employers – Gold Coast City Council and Bond for example – are providing PD to their employees
- the ALIA PD scheme was seen as being too onerous – the paperwork is too hard
- it is difficult to identify PD opportunities, determine their value (points) in the scheme and often members will do the PD but then won't record them (too time consuming, don't remember to etc)
- what is the benefit of joining the PD scheme? Apart from benefits to one's CV, why bother?
- The meeting felt that to make it worth member's while to join the scheme, it would have to result in greater access to PD and professional networks.
- It would need to result in greater pride in professionalism, not just a certificate.
- It requires a lot of effort to get to PD events (with so much other competition for our time and energy) so it must provide something concrete – and much more likely to do PD if it's brought to the region.

1. *What do we need to do to ensure that we have the skills for a future workforce?*

- Marketing the profession and attracting suitable people to the profession
- It was felt that ALIA should see this as a priority. Employing marketing students rather than full professionals might not be the best approach
- There were many positive aspects of the profession (interesting work, transferable and portable skills etc)
- Provide positive experiences to work experience students so that they will continue with that career path
- Re-evaluate and re-energise to provide the forum for members to get together and create their own PD
- Decrease the reliance on volunteers when it comes to PD
- Future theme for an *inCite* edition: projection of the future of the profession
- *incite* is a good marketing tool and contains good information.
- Libraries are not good at promoting themselves and their profession. There is a constant need for practical information so that we have the ability and confidence to promote and showcase ourselves
- The profession is so diverse in terms of skills – library schools can't teach it all so the profession must rely on PD to skill up workers especially in areas such as organisational behaviour.
- It's important to have a diversity of people, especially those with panache and style who are willing to take risks – individuality and creativity shouldn't be 'trained out' of people and these traits need to be developed just as much as traditional skills.
- Skills such as negotiation, HR, library architecture and budgeting are perhaps better gained after some experience – they should not necessarily be taught during library courses.

2. *What is the role of employers and employees in professional development?*

Employers:

- It was felt that academic libraries are better at supporting staff PD than other types of libraries. Also, easier to gain the required points as working in academic libraries meant access to QULOC¹ PD events, conferences and research projects etc
- It was also acknowledged that employers on the coast were generally very good at supporting their staff's professional development
- Support employees to do PD during work hours
- Include PD in annual performance review

Employees:

- Identify opportunities and be willing to put in effort

3. *How can the Association's PD Scheme be utilised to support this goal?*

- ALIA should follow up with people who have joined the scheme. They should contact members to "jog their memory", see how they are going, and provide encouragement
- Provide certificates to prompt people to record the activity for the PD scheme

¹ Queensland University Libraries Office of Cooperation

- Simplify paperwork. The database is not useful. Members should be able to scan in relevant paperwork and upload it to a central repository which records all PD activities – such as an e-portfolio. No one wants to have to handle the paperwork more than once.
- Have a system that automatically recorded points for you when you registered for an ALIA event or conference
- It would be great if you could connect with other people through the PD scheme (through the suggested repository or e-portfolio) for example to find other people who were doing similar things to you.
- The auditing is too onerous
- Justifications are too onerous – easier to do in a personal blog which could be linked to an e-portfolio
- Focus on sharing learnings and making connections between people
- Provide help in setting up PD events – local examples of events included successful entrepreneur associated with football club addressing the group on leadership etc – but it must be run very professionally so might require seed funding etc
- Facilitate through e-list or other means job exchanges, secondments etc to help cross skilling of workforce.
- Often feedback from PD events had to be provided to workplace. Should be able to scan these in rather than have to repeat in a different format for ALIA scheme
- Advertise PD points value with promotional material for conferences etc

4. *Can a compulsory PD Scheme benefit the profession?*

- It was generally agreed that a chartership was not possible but the PD scheme could be useful in gaining further employment.
- It was thought that even doctors couldn't get a compulsory scheme going now if they had to put it in place today – they only achieve it because it was put in place so early.
- A rigorous scheme could be tied to selection criteria
- Students should be allowed (and should be encouraged) to join the PD scheme so they form good habits and start accruing points while it's easy to do so
- Older members shouldn't be disaffected by any changes

5. *What do you see is ALIA's role in these areas? How can we engage employers and employees? And other professional bodies and training organisations?*

- ALIA should provide better and more attractive information about the PD scheme
- Ensure groups pages are up to date and it's easy to identify which are the groups active in PD
- Lobby employers to recognise professionalism
- Look at categories for membership
- Keep diversity in the types of acceptable PD activities, for example non-library courses should be counted
- It was felt strongly that ALIA should be the one voice in Australia representing library and information workers for example, to government.
- ALIA should advertise non-ALIA events on its events calendar

5. Celebrating Success – ALIA stories of Achievement

Rhonda Middleton and Jan Morrow ran a very successful cross sector marketing exercise with council and Qld Government Disability Services when they participated in the All Abilities Playground showcasing special needs libraries.

The group felt that the number of libraries in the area – specials, universities and councils – was a success story in itself. It's a great place to have a career, to live and there is a great cross fertilisation of ideas.

Library and Information Week – Kate Davis was integral to the inaugural "literati on the glitter strip" festival. The dinner which attracted 120 people saw two authors at every table. The council also held author talks in 6 branches.

Gold Coast City Council libraries have between 8-10,000 people per day through the door. The Gold Coast City Council is increasing its circulation despite losing one branch during the recent redistribution. Bond University are increasing their circulation figures, against the trend in most university libraries.

Bond University has opened its new multi-media learning centre.

Leona Jennings' Online On Tour success across Australia.

6. Local issues

There was some discussion about a formal group for the Gold Coast. This could provide a focus for developing PD opportunities on the coast and would ensure local support from ALIA's national office and the Qld local liaison officer.

Local employers wanted staff with an awareness of social planning to help with long-term strategy and planning, especially in public libraries. They want a variety of PD activities so that staff get 'the big picture'. There is also a need locally for 'meet the profession' type events for graduates. PD here relies heavily on a few active people and the energy of the practitioners as a group needs to be revitalised. They want ALIA staff and board members to actively promote various aspects of ALIA.

Gold Coast members are working long hours making it difficult to fit in PD.

Recruiting new volunteers was difficult but seen as very necessary for a vibrant PD program.

It was felt that QUT could do more with PD on the Gold Coast for example providing refresher courses for library workers.

7. Evaluation

No evaluation forms returned

8. Any other comments from the meeting?