



Australian
Library and
Information
Association

ALIA NAC Regional Reports 2008

Location: Hobart

Date: 23 July 2008

1. Attendance:

Leonie Atkins, Jo Beck, Pat Bomford, Frances Coll, Chris Evans, Gail Friesen, Jennifer Jerome, Heather Jones, Linda Luther, Ian Morrison, Karmen Pemberton, Andie Smithies, Graeme Watt and Deborah Wright.

Chair: Damian Lodge

Minutes: Sally Murdoch

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

Name: Heather Jones

ALIA Membership No.: 00047475

3. Review of Education and Workforce Summit outcomes

Members were advised of the outcomes of the Education and Workforce Summit.

Another summit was suggested, for the Information profession. This could include librarians, record managers, archivists, etc. to discuss common issues across all professions. (Action: Damian will follow up with National Office.)

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

- It is interesting that ALIA is co-ordinating outsourced online programs – FOLIOz and it is hoped that ALIA will follow up on people who do the course to obtain and share feedback on whether the course was worthwhile. (Action: Damian to follow up.)
- There are no clear rewards and no outcomes from the PD scheme.
- Collecting the points is not onerous; it is the recordkeeping around the PD scheme that is.
- The time keeping up with the PD scheme recordkeeping is an issue.
- It was suggested that there may be less incentive for older people to participate in the PD scheme - perhaps those interested in promotion are more interested in 'ticks' to prove that they can do something.
- At the University of Tasmania, there is a 'Librarian A' and 'Librarian B' promotion scheme whereby staff complete training, reflective journal, etc. and can then apply to be reclassified at a higher level: there is a clear benefit to this scheme.
- Suggested incentives to increase participation in the PD scheme:
 - A certificate to attach to new job applications

- Reduced membership rates!
- A special dinner at the Biennial or special event for people interested in PD.
- The PD scheme could help build portable skills for staff at risk of job loss or redundancy to move sideways or out
- Organisations need to define the skills they require and ALIA provide PD that develop these skills
- Changing 'eligibility for membership to ALIA' as a job requirement to 'participant in ALIA PD scheme'

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

- Skills needed to be a library manger such as Project management and Strategic management
- A suggestion was made to customise existing management-type courses for librarians and library situations, for example, engaging stakeholders, what do you if your library has no money

What can ALIA do to work with library managers to build up staff skills?

- Work with library schools.
- Employers are struggling to describe what skills their staff should have. We know that libraries' roles are changing but haven't yet defined what staff skills are required.
- We are not good at expressing why libraries are essential – can ALIA help us say this and demonstrate the benefit of libraries and librarians and why they are essential? This is especially important for solo librarians – how do you promote the role of a librarian to someone who is not a librarian, especially a senior manager?
- We should look at success stories overseas that promote libraries – what are they doing that we aren't?
- We need to learn how to lobby politically and understand just how broadly some decisions are made, for example choosing between a national library database and a battleship.
- PD generally focuses on business needs not individual need and organisations expect individuals to focus on personal development. Employers will put more effort into individual PD when there are staff shortages in order to become an employer of choice.

Can a compulsory PD scheme benefit the profession?

- Who would administer it? Employers have enough challenges.
- If compulsory, there is not so much questioning it, you just accept it.
- This is an industrial relations question, is this qualification required for this job? If no, then it has no traction.
- Perhaps there shouldn't be automatic renewal of ALIA membership, and after 12 months you have to demonstrate PD in order to renew.
- Nurses, accountants, teachers, surveyors, GPs etc are all required to complete PD and are taken seriously.
- Don't like compulsory anything.

Why are people joining ALIA? What do they get? Why are they not joining? What should ALIA be doing?

- Some people join ALIA for job seeking purposes: they believe that being a member is beneficial.
- People join ALIA for reduced conference registration rates.
- There are different ways of keeping up to date, ALIA could take a role in packaging information – value adding – by using blogs, wikis, etc to provide summaries to members.

- What is the risk to an employer when employing someone to look after library rather than a librarian? NLA is not insisting on qualified librarians. An example of risk is ending up in court due to copyright issues.
- Several anecdotes were made about qualifications, staffing and recruitment in different areas:
 - In New Zealand, people are being employed for generic, non-library skills but the expectation is that they will go and get the LIS qualification.
 - University of Adelaide Library recruits subject specialists, library qualifications are a secondary don't like employing librarians and consideration.
 - There has been discussion within the State Library of Tasmania about the skills required of City Librarians, the low numbers of people applying for level 3 positions and whether these positions could be filled by people other than librarians.
 - The Archives Office of Tasmania has recently been brought back into the State Library of Tasmania. Many archivists have no formal qualifications yet are employed at the same (professional) pay scale as librarians.
 - A recent Victoria public libraries report outlined problems in recruiting middle-senior staff.
- How rigorous is ALIA course accreditation? We should be making more forceful representation to LIS schools about skills we want.
- Generic skills (communication, project management) are more important than specialist skills.
- Is there a case for national qualification at a degree level, like the library technician qualification? This would give library schools something to work to.
- For people who have been out of the workforce for a while, the PD scheme could help them to return to the workforce, in conjunction with an employment program in-house – useful for re-accreditation.
- Compulsory PD discriminates against small special libraries due to time, expense and lack of support, so you need a very flexible scheme.
- Need to demonstrate the benefits of a PD scheme to your employer, and it needs to include PD not necessarily focused on libraries.
- At TAFE Tasmania, teachers have to do 30 hours of compulsory PD a year. Staff put this on a form and TAFE track it.
- If institutional PD forms were compatible with ALIA's PD forms, there would be less double-handling.
- The PD scheme needs to be linked to what industry wants.
- Organisational performance management plans include training / PD plans.
- How many ALIA touring events come to Tasmania? (Kevin Henna workshop, ALIA/CAVAL Disaster management training, the OPAC is dead presentation and there is another one coming up later in the year.)
- Bringing events, speakers etc. to Tasmania makes joining ALIA worthwhile.
- Lobby the government to bring back the compulsory percent spent on development / training.
- The ALIA conference is the premium event. Is ALIA videoing speakers / creating podcasts and making this available only to ALIA members? After 12 months it could be made freely available to all. This would allow employers to run events over lunch time to staff.

Membership value

- Suggestion that ALIA identify external funding available to support training, such as sources of funding to support long term staff to obtain

qualifications, training supplements, grant sourcing. Then ALIA could organise 'how to write grant applications' workshops.

- Volunteer management in libraries.
- Need to market the PD scheme better, to different audiences – ALIA educators, have road shows, sell it better. (Action: Sally to discuss further with UTAS and State Library of Tasmania.)
- Requirements for the PD scheme are basic.
- Historical note: examinations by LAA, moving full circle if we move to compulsory PD!
- Perhaps it is time to rethink the old fee structure where you signed up for a few special interest groups for free and paid for others.

5. ALIA Initiatives for 2009 (draft Goals for 2009)

No discussion on this topic.

6. Celebrating Success – ALIA stories of Achievement

- ALIA Tasmania events including the Library & Information Week Quiz Night, and more recently, a 'Welcome function' for new University of Tasmania librarianship students.
- Several Northern Area Regional Group (NARG) events.
- Other ALIA events including Kevin Hennah, the OPAC is dead and Disaster management training.
- The organising committee for the ALIA Tasmania conference (planned for October this year) has a cross sectoral membership with representatives from school, law, public, state, TAFE and university libraries.

Other local success stories, not specifically ALIA related.

- The State Library of Tasmania and University of Tasmania are working together to bring a speaker from the ALIA Biennial to Tasmania and will promote to ALIA members.
- The Australian Antarctic Library ran several talks as a Library & Information week promotion (map catalogues, libraries & Antarctica, and internet searching) and are still getting positive feedback.

7. Local issues

- School library staffing: library technicians are running school libraries in Tasmania. The Department of Education is taking a cheap staffing option since library technicians don't have teaching qualifications. Would like lobbying at a state level – Tasmania has low literacy levels and public libraries are being asked to address problems which could be addressed if school libraries were funded and staffed adequately. (Action: Damian will follow up to see what happened (lobbying with ASLA?) after this was raised at last year's NAC.)

8. Evaluation

Twelve completed evaluation sheets were returned. Feedback was very positive and many commented on the value of networking with other members.

Thanks to the University of Tasmania Library for hosting the NAC.

Minutes amended 18 August 2008.