



Australian
Library and
Information
Association

ALIA NAC Regional Reports 2008

Location: Hunter, Wallsend District Library

Date: 9 July 2008

1. Attendance:

9 members and 1 non-member were in attendance. See attached list.

The meeting was facilitated by Helen Partridge, ALIA Director. The report was prepared by Niki Kallenberger, NSW Local Liaison Officer.

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

Name: Kieran O'Donoghue

ALIA membership no. _____

3. Review of Education and Workforce Summit outcomes

Members present were pleased to receive a report on the Summit and subsequent progress on emerging issues.

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

Our discussion began with consideration of ALIA's CPD scheme. Only one member was enrolled, and there were many questions:

- What counts towards PD? Knowledge of the scheme's details were very sketchy amongst those present.*
- Are there local activities that would count? Access to PD is an issue for people living in rural and regional areas. If travel and fees are involved, then taking part in the scheme becomes very difficult.*
- Is the name too formal? Maybe it's misleading, but on the other hand, maybe it adds credibility.*
- Do employers know much about the scheme? ALIA needs to build the scheme's profile – employers such as local councils will like it, but they don't know about it.*
- Can the PD scheme be linked to performance development schemes?*
- The State Library of New South Wales is developing KPIs for public library staffing – is ALIA part of this?*
- Is there any evidence-based research into employer views on PD?*
- Presentations build the profession and are good PD for you – do they count in the scheme?*
- The further you go up the managerial ladder, the further you get from actual library work – how does the scheme cater for this?*
- How portable is the scheme?*
- Was ALIA's scheme benchmarked on other schemes?*

The bottom line is "What's in it for me?" Key factors for being involved in ALIA's PD scheme are recognition within the industry and within the organisation where you work.

Should PD be compulsory?

The LIS profession is not a static one, and we need to be able to respond to change. We also need to widen the reach of the profession to include IT, marketing, etc. PD is a great way to achieve these things, so maybe yes, PD should be compulsory.

If the scheme were compulsory, it would be important to be able to choose a level or options that help **you** reach **your** goals. ALIA should provide help to you to do this.

If it was compulsory, a phased-in approach would be essential, eg 10 points in year 1, 20 points in year 2, then 30 by year 3.

Goals need to be clear and rigorous. Two of those present noted that "as a nurse, our mother was always doing (and expected to do) 'refresher training'".

Should ALIA deliver training?

ALIA should accredit but not necessarily deliver training. Like the medical profession, we need to regularly update, renew, and refresh our learning. The ALIA "tick of approval" would be welcome, because the Association has credibility.

What can ALIA do for teacher-librarianship?

As a student, ALIA could help me find a job!

How can PD help us deal with an ageing workforce?

- Leadership courses are important, and they are PD.
- Mentoring or shadowing are important, and ALIA can help here.
- We need to find as many ways as we can to pass our knowledge on as we approach retirement – PD can help us do this.

What is the role of employers with regard to PD?

- The trend in recruitment is towards emotional intelligence, not PD.
- Employers put together training plans – can ALIA help here?
- Three key stakeholders: individual, educator and employer. But "I'm the one who's responsible for my PD, because I'm the one who knows where I want to be in 10 years. However, I expect my employer to support me with funding and time for PD."
- It would be great to have some benchmarks for employers with regard to time and funding allocations for PD.
- Sometimes there is a conflict of interest – eg, my employer wants me to do Web 2.0 training, but I can't access YouTube at work!

What else can ALIA do?

- "I've signed up for the PD scheme, but there's been no follow up from ALIA, so I didn't do anything!" ALIA needs to provide ongoing support, perhaps most usefully, online. Even an email once or twice a year would be great.
- Create some communities of practice – they might be geographical, sectoral, etc.
- Pursue the idea of a "chartered librarian" ala the UK. The recognition it carries would be very welcome.

- *Sell the PD scheme to employers – once they understand it, they will welcome it. PD could be connected to pay levels, status, etc.*

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

This was not discussed.

6. Celebrating Success – ALIA stories of Achievement

Web 2.0 workshops held earlier in the year were very popular, with approximately 30 attending. They were hands-on and there is interest in more. TAFE spaces, IT and expertise were used, with TAFE librarians attending at no charge. Congratulations to all involved!

Lake Macquarie City Library and local schools are working with a Pets as Therapy program to support reluctant readers. Reading to a dog achieves excellent results. It's an Australian first!

7. Local issues

There is significant interest in re-vitalising a local ALIA group. Catherine Knight and Natarsha Norton volunteered to get things moving again. All present agreed to be contacted regarding possible involvement in the next step. Niki will forward email addresses to Catherine.

Significant concern was expressed regarding staffing levels and pay rates in local public libraries. The added burden on library staff created by government websites which require support for effective use was also noted. While this issue was investigated by a State Library of New South Wales research report a few years ago, it does not seem to have been followed up.

Advocacy re library management systems and Web 2.0 would be very well received. It was suggested ALIA work with library software providers in this regard. One welcome outcome would be better prices on RFID tags!

8. Evaluation

Members were delighted to have a NAC meeting held locally. They commented very positively on the venue, the opportunity to meet an ALIA Director and LLO, and being able to discuss matters of interest and importance with colleagues.

9. Any other comments from the meeting?

- *Post-nominals are out of fashion!*
- *Marketing -- We need to get to new graduates and let them know that being a librarian is a real option (It's hard to find people to fill positions, esp in public libraries, in this area).*
- *Alan Brough, well-known panellist on Spicks and Specks, is currently an LIS student. Wouldn't it be good to enlist him for a marketing campaign?!*
- *Let's get an ALIA member as a panellist on Jennifer Byrne's First Tuesday Book Club.*
- *It would be great if we could do the "23 Things about Web 2.0" course through ALIA. (could Yarra Plenty Regional Library administer it? Probably so!)*

**Thanks to Newcastle Region Library and Wallsend District Library
for a great venue!**