



Australian
Library and
Information
Association

ALIA NAC Regional Reports 2008

1. Attendance:

Ian McGregor – 021769
Jenny Ellis – Uni of Melb - membership number not known
Louise Segafredo – Membership number not known
Julia Leong – 012125
Rachael Johnson – Vision Australia – Membership number not known
Deborah Mould – 43301
David Feighan – 53813
Maela Himbug – 24217
Karen Kealy – Uni of Melb – Membership number not known
Kay Steel - 4538
Michelle Thomason – 052291
Alison O'Connor – 046298
Kerrie Ludekins – 043877
Dawn Kelleher – Membership number not known
Chris Kelly – 039984
Derek Whitehead – Membership number not known
Margie Anderson - 939331

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

Name: ~~Karen Kealy~~ _____

ALIA membership no. ~~University of Melbourne~~ – ~~Personal membership number~~
not known

3. Review of Education and Workforce Summit outcomes

Derek reported on the outcomes of the Education Summit.

The meeting agreed that it was of great importance to bring educators in the industry together to provide a platform for discussion of the need of the industry and to look at gaps in the education process. There were concerns that there is insufficient discussion between institutions and that the competitive aspect of higher education means that students find it hard to get information about what each institution is doing and that institutions look like they are working against each other.

This just adds to the confusion for future applicants. It is very difficult to work out what the various courses offer and how they fit into the workplace.

The meeting discussed the need to bring people with existing degrees and experience into the industry and skill them up with information management

skills. It was felt we need to seek people with a wider range of educational backgrounds and then layer information management on top of their current skills.

The meeting questioned the viability of taking existing staff and skilling them in areas such as IT, marketing, and industry specifics such as Law. It was felt that it would be better to pull existing IT or market etc professionals into our industry and they provide them with Information management training.

As an example, Alison O'Connor discussed the shortage of Law Librarians and admitted she found it easier to employ a law professional and then train them in librarianship. Teachers are also being used in the same way to fill gaps for Children's Librarians.

We need to look at how we can entice people from other industries into information management.

There was extensive discussion around the topic of remuneration and fears that salary levels in the industry were not sufficient to be attractive to professionals in other areas. Several participants commented that their salaries were clearly equal to other professionals in their organisation and should not be seen as detrimental.

There was acknowledgement that some salaries in Victoria for Library workers have improved over recent years and are very competitive with other states and sectors.

There is an urgent need to provide accurate and extensive salary information for all states and across a variety of employers and sectors. The current listing of NSW government employee salaries on the ALIA website is insufficient and not reflective of what really happens in the industry.

In order to attract other professionals to information management we need to look at how employers can facilitate their training once they join the organisation, either through payment of HECS fees or time off for study.

As an industry we need to look at which skills we are prepared to forgo in order to employ someone from an outside profession and which information management skills are not negotiable.

The meeting felt it was unclear whether or not the learning institutions currently have it right in which 'not negotiable' skills they are teaching. They feel that institutions are focusing on teaching librarians other skills, such as business, rather than teaching business people skills in information management. The focus should be on the information management.

Learning institutions need to tailor their courses to professionals from other areas that wish to gain information management qualifications but are working full time.

The meeting agreed that librarians will always have difficulty paying higher salaries even to the most in-demand people because we usually work for an organisation where our funding is not elastic and our value to the organisation is not seen as high.

As always, we need to constantly be providing the industry with tools to demonstrate their values to their organisation.

Dire shortages in the following areas were highlighted: Law Librarians, Children's Librarians, Cataloguers and Teacher - Librarians. These are all areas given little emphasis by learning institutions.

We need to work closely with career teachers to encourage more year 10 students to undertake work experience in libraries.

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

The general feeling on the current PD Scheme is that the effort of becoming a member and keeping records of PD activities does not match the value gained from the Scheme.

Employers don't see any value in the Scheme. Most employers and managers do not know of the PD Scheme nor understand why they would want employees to be PD members.

Members of the PD Scheme are not viewed as being more attractive to employers.

The use of the PD post-nominals was not seen as beneficial at all.

There is a feeling that the PD Scheme is "preaching to the choir" in that the only people doing it are already those committed to their PD anyway.

Current members want easier methods for tracking and recording their PD points. Suggestions include: Upgrading the online tracking system to include details or actual events etc rather than just hours undertaken. LLO's to record people's point when they actually attend an event., electronic collection of points into a database during the rsvp process for an event.

Current members are still not clear on the requirements for points. Members do not understand that point can be accrued for non ALIA events.

Managers need to be persuaded into including the PD Scheme in their workers annual performance review.

More training needs to be provided for managers about the PD Scheme.

The Scheme is important to ALIA as a vehicle to encourage people in the industry to up skill - it is just not achieving that at the moment. There is huge room for improvement.

A compulsory PD Scheme would not be accepted by the membership at large. A lot of lobbying on the benefits of the Scheme would need to be done before it was seen as valuable.

5. Celebrating Success - ALIA stories of Achievement ***Please overwrite this text***

Chris Kelly reported on the progress of the Working Party to Promote Careers in the Information Industry. The group had held a very successful industry information evening earlier in the week to provide information to people considering joining the industry. The event was held at the SLV with

representatives of all learning institutions in Victoria, and Charles Sturt Uni, and more than 90 participants.

The event builds on the Groups creating of the destination library wiki and work promoting the industry with Careers Teachers

6. Local issues

No specific issues were identified. All issues were seen as being relevant across the country.

7. Evaluation

Forms forwarded to National Office.

Generally participants rate very highly the need to participate in the NAC experience.

8. Any other comments from the meeting?

Important issues for the industry and ALIA as a whole are:

- Recruitment of top quality people to the industry
- Fragmentation within the industry – different sectors, different professional bodies and representatives.
- Splinter groups such as Health Libraries Inc who feel ALIA does not meet their needs.
- Need to work closer with other professional organisations such as VICLINK.
- We need to draw in more members and more organisations to build the critical mass required to become the central advocacy we should be.

Margie Anderson
LLO – Victoria
August 2008