



Australian
Library and
Information
Association

ALIA NAC Regional Reports 2009

The Von Stieglitz meeting room
Thuringowa Central Branch Library
Townsville
2:30 pm, 2 October 2009

The meeting was facilitated by Helen Partridge, ALIA Director. The report was prepared by Alice Logan.

1. Attendance:

See separate attendance sheet

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

Name: _____ Joanna Ruxton (AIMS library)

ALIA membership no. _____

3. Review of the outcomes from the 2008 NAC topic '*Staying smart in a complicated world - professional development*'

What is our perception of improvements or changes in that area?

- Desire to have more satellite events in North Qld – either through ALIA or organised separately
- Online courses are our best option in regional areas, eg Folioz courses
- When trying to organise PD events there is a danger of 'volunteer fatigue'. Same core group of local organisers every time
- Helen advised that there is now a half time PD position at ALIA
- Helen reminded everyone about monthly PD newsletter

4. Discussion topic: *Lobbying and Advocacy: working together to make a difference*

1. *What is lobbying and advocacy? How is it different to marketing?*

- Lobbying is getting the best deal for your group
- Ongoing, constant knocking on doors
- Raising your profile
- Trying to change policy and /or get more money
- Marketing your goods and services
- Attempting to get access to more resources
- Making people aware of what we do and the services that we have available

What is your perception of ALIA activities such as Library week?

- Too public library centric
- Too school library centric
- Are ALIA really doing enough to represent special libraries, such as health, law, etc
- Are ALIA doing enough to represent the industry on big issues such as copyright, etc
- Library Lovers Day and Summer Reading group not seen as relevant to special or academic libraries

2. *Why is lobbying and advocacy important to our profession and how can we do it better?*

The discussion focussed on advocacy for the non-public library domain.

- Do more on big issues such as copyright, internet usage restrictions, etc
- More Lobbying to government and management for funding and acknowledgment of the value of libraries
- Unfortunately Australia not seen as having a tradition of philanthropy like the US.
- Improvement in providing ready to use marketing materials and products for non public libraries
- Co-ordinate meaningful, independent benchmarking data for essential resources for special libraries
- Make it easier for libraries to identify similar libraries to your own library
- Desire for more courses on marketing skills
- Regional areas are often only attracting generic or basic training (ie copyright) – rather than advanced, follow on courses
- Desire for new, topical courses such as “Application of Web 2.0”, rather than just “What is Web 2.0”
- Would be good to have a diversity of materials produced for library week, ie posters and materials for special libraries, academic libraries, health libraries, etc
- Raising the profile of libraries is a core desire
- Librarians are more than just people putting books on shelves
- Need help breaking down the traditional librarian stereotypes
- People often surprised that we have one or more degree qualifications
- Should we have a national strike day to raise the awareness of how valuable librarians are?
- Perhaps ALIA should compile a useful database of searchable resources for good marketing ideas
- Look at national advertising campaigns like “every family needs a farmer”
- Librarians need to stop being martyrs and start saying “No” when pressured by management to do more with less
- Do more investigation and analysis of Return on Investment (ROI) for Library value and services
- Investigate economies of scale in the industry
- Compile toolbox of resources on the value of libraries (but hard because it is often based on a lot of qualitative data rather than quantitative data)
- Provide a “Library Policy” toolbox
- Celebrate the “intellectual diversity” of librarians

- Lobby for more credit/acknowledgement to be given to librarians and their role, i.e. in research publications or in the credits of TV shows, etc

3. *What are the top things that ALIA could do for you?*

- National site licence for "Australian Standards"
- Higher standards and recognition of professional qualifications
- Easier more stream-lined access to funding for bringing speakers to North Qld (or provide a system where a nominal amount is given to each region per year to spend at will). We can often just offer to pay for flights and 1-2 nights accommodation for speakers to attract them up north)
- Helping smaller libraries to identify consortia
- Provide support, frameworks, etc for finding "like libraries", eg, Fishnet, Gratisnet
- Assist with "Service Level Agreement" documentation and templates backed by ALIA as the professional association

4. *What are some of the top issues from the Employers perspective?*

- Make sure that people are employed with professional qualifications
- Look at recruitment guidelines, as a lot of them have been watered down and the standards are dropping
- "Don't just make do" – librarians are often too resourceful at doing more for less
- ALIA could help with:
 - providing better understanding of HR issues
 - providing assistance with "how to manage the managers"
 - assist vulnerable special librarians who often find it hard to build trust and get respect in their organisations
 - assist in finding better links and relationship building between managers and librarians
 - assist with "Service level analysis"
 - assist with building and defining "Business cases"
 - assist with examples of library floor plans for new special libraries

From the North Qld perspective:

- provide practical toolboxes with document templates to avoid re-inventing the wheel
- "start up" toolkits for various types of libraries, eg. Academic, public, health, special
- promotional campaign for attracting people to the profession
- start reclaiming the name "Librarian" and being proud of it
- continue to lobby for pay equity among states, etc
- investigate implementing a "Librarian registration board" or something similar, like teachers, health, engineers

- local or national advocacy to complain about job advertisements not requiring correct library qualifications. Eg. A proforma letter sent out to employer when it is noticed that job ad's have watered down the qualifications required
- provide better tools to enable us to be better advocates for ourselves
- investigate a national advertising campaign, eg. "the Tax ad where the geeky tax agent celebrates a little win for her client in a geeky, cute way", "Every family needs a farmer", "imagine what you could do in 7 days in the airforce" –but for librarians the slogan might be: "imagine what you could do in a lifetime as a Librarian..."
- encourage librarians to have a "testosterone injection".....

5. Local issues

Local issues were not discussed

6. Any other comments from the meeting?

7. Evaluation

Thank you to all those members who provided evaluation of the NAC to assist ALIA in planning for future NACs. Thank you also to Alice Logan and Alicia Bolam for their invaluable assistance.