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International Engagement features in inCite this month.

inCite is the news magazine of the Australian Library and Information Association. It presents perspectives on issues relating to library and information science.

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“Australian librarians attended the first global meeting of librarians and continue to make huge contributions more than a century later”

- Alex Byrne, p31
I was lucky enough to go to IFLA for the first time this year. As I said in the ALIA blog, it’s like the United Nations for the library world. At the 2010 IFLA Congress there were approximately 3,000 delegates from 128 different countries. The annual IFLA Congress is undoubtedly the pinnacle in terms of international engagement and making connections. It’s a combination of meetings and a general library conference, with underlying tenets of international collaboration and the sharing of ideas and issues.

Attending such an event certainly made me reflect about how we’re (ALIA) positioned internationally, and how the Australian library environment compares with other parts of the world. I’d have to say on both counts we are positioned very well. Obviously there are a large number of developing countries which haven’t yet had the opportunity to develop sophisticated library and information associations such as ours. Surprisingly, even a number library and information associations of well developed countries don’t seem to be as well positioned as ALIA in terms of structure, function and activities. The Australian library environment also seems quite healthy compared to a number of our peer countries. No doubt there are a number of Australian libraries affected by the GFC but its impact on Australian libraries seemed to be fairly benign when compared to some of the drastic measures that are being taken overseas. Although things are tough for many libraries at the moment, my own included, I’d have to say we are a lucky country though of course that doesn’t mean things couldn’t be better.

One of the real benefits of attending conferences where there are international delegates is meeting them and understanding their issues (one of the downsides is feeling envious of people who can speak fluent English in addition to their native tongue and probably one or two other languages). Interestingly enough, regardless of where our international colleagues are from, once you strip away the relative wealth factor many of the issues are the same – member engagement, funding, staffing, technology, and government support. We can certainly all learn from each other, regardless of how rich or poor our countries and libraries may be.

One international theme not many of us have thought about is providing library services to people in immigration detention centres. While libraries in Australia have been providing collections for migrants for many years (did you know that the Mt Isa public library used to have one the largest collections of Finnish language material in Australia?) we are now faced with this different challenge. This was raised at our most recent Board meeting in October. It currently appears to be a topic that sits in political ‘no man’s land’. Whose responsibility is it to provide the service and resources and to ensure it is of an appropriate standard – The Department of Immigration and Citizenship, contractors who manage the centres on their behalf, state governments, or local authorities? ALIA has written to DIAC seeking clarification on the issue.

Now dear reader (I know there are at least a dozen of you who read my column) it’s that time of the year again for you to consider whether you’d like to have a direct influence on the direction ALIA is taking. Regardless of whether you support the direction the Association is taking or would like to see it take an alternative direction, nominations are being called for the Board of Directors and Vice President/President elect. Being on the ALIA Board is interesting and challenging and it certainly increases your awareness of the broad church that is ALIA. For the past two years, ALIA Board Directors and Vice Presidents have ascended to their positions without the need for an election. This is not a healthy situation for an organisation of fifty members, let alone one like ALIA with about six thousand members. Please consider!

Back to the international theme. Although I’m pre-empting next year’s library tourist issue of inCite I thought I’d get in early and show you a photo of the Stockholm Public Library. It was built in 1928 and is situated not far from the Stockholm CBD. Inside it’s wonderfully airy and light with the stacks literally running around the inside wall. It’s simply one of the nicest libraries I’ve visited.
Your IFLA membership
This edition of inCite has an international focus and you may not be aware that as a financial member of ALIA you are also a member of the International Federation of Library Associations. ALIA pays the annual membership fee as a National Association member of IFLA so that we, on behalf of all Australian libraries and library staff, can support the important work of IFLA.

IFLA represents us all on international issues that impact on the whole profession, as well as ensuring equality of access to information for the world community. Through this network, we have representation at key international events and in essential advocacy in the areas of copyright, freedom of access to information, freedom of expression and the Internet Manifesto. IFLA also coordinates the collection of key international statistics and produces the World Library Report.

A number of Australians are involved in the Building Strong Library Associations program (see Gill Hallam’s story in this issue), aiming to strengthen support for libraries through library associations that can advocate more effectively. With library closures and funding cuts in other countries happening this year (noting the US and UK as examples), the support and advocacy provided by strong library associations for every country is essential. ALIA also currently has official representation on ten of IFLA’s Standing Committees and we thank all our ALIA members who volunteer their time and expertise on international committees and projects. I encourage you to look through the extensive IFLA website and join an e-list or view an IFLA blog for the latest international news, and to read on to learn more about what your colleagues are doing – and learning - on the international stage.

NBN and libraries
I had an excellent advocacy opportunity last month with an invitation to present a keynote at the CSIRO Broadband for Society Summit in Hobart. This week-long event saw a gathering of a wide variety of local, interstate and international stakeholders of the NBN taking time to discuss the ‘what’s next’ for the National Broadband Network. I was pleased to see the opening speaker of the Summit from CSIRO, Dr Ian Oppermann, mention in his speech the literacy figures for Australia and that CSIRO and others have already identified this as a factor in how effective the NBN might be. He highlighted that 1% of Australians are illiterate, and as we also know, 46% of Australians are prose illiterate (see the fact sheets for the National Year of Reading 2012 at http://www.love2read.org.au).

The Summit gave ALIA the opportunity to bring to the fore a number of our key advocacy points around equal access to broadband and the role that libraries play in broadband adoption and training Australians in the productive use of the internet and associated technologies. Delegates were especially interested in the initiatives by the National Library of Australia with the Pandora and Trove programs. Our ALIA media release to accompany the Summit called on the government to release their national digital strategy as soon as possible and to support cultural institutions to ensure quality Australian content for the NBN. ALIA is working with NBNCo and DBCDE to ensure communication with libraries as the NBN rolls out. We will be hosting further teleconferences in 2011 with library managers from first rollout and regional rollout areas to discuss how we can be more involved in our communities to ensure greater participation, awareness and skill development for our communities to go along with the broadband access.

School Library Roundtable
The first ever meeting of all state and national Australian School Library Associations and ALIA was held in Brisbane on 8 November 2010. This was a historic meeting, concluding an important year for school libraries. With the House of Representatives Inquiry into School Libraries and Teacher Librarians being conducted and with further work next year with the report likely to be completed and released by the government in the first quarter of 2011, it was important for the Associations to get together to work on possible outcomes of the Inquiry, and talk about how to speak with one voice on the common issues.

Our thanks to Karen Bonanno and ASLA for organising and leading the Roundtable and to Softlink for their support to host the day. You can also read the media release about the day at http://www.alia.org.au/media_room/2010.11.17.html. If you are an ALIA member and interested in school libraries, please join the aliaSCHOOLS e-list to keep up with the news.

Happy Christmas and on to 2011
On behalf of all the ALIA Staff and the Board of Directors, I would like to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and a happy and healthy new year. As we get ready at National Office for the festive season, we’re proud that our electronic ALIA Christmas Card complements and wraps up our year of ‘going green’.

Often during the Christmas and New Years we also start to wonder what will the next year bring. I hope that you will take time to remember 2010 for the achievements you have gained for yourself, your library service and your library association. ALIA looks forward to working with you on your 2011 professional goals, whether it’s to advance your skills, volunteer for the Association, find a new job, gain better recognition and funding for your library or contribute to the bigger issues of our profession and the Australian community.

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AUSTRALIANS ON THE INTERNATIONAL STAGE

This international engagement issue of inCite has garnered interest from ALIA members in Australia and overseas, even emailed on the run between airport lounges. You will read about colleagues taking our professional expertise and support to our neighbour nations, and others who have travelled to bring back home the best practice and experience to incorporate into our own library systems.

Ours is a collegiate profession, inveterate networkers in our daily duties as well as in our endeavours to be the best we can be. For library and information professionals just starting to think about extending your efforts beyond Australia, some who have travelled before you share in these pages their memories, experiences, and their top tips for getting started.

ALIA is a proud member of IFLA, and we can count amongst our membership a number who have taken active roles on the international stage. As you read, you will see a common thread — that to step up to the international arena, whether to learn or to share, invariably produces great satisfaction and renews a passion for the profession. And amazing photo albums.

Librarians without borders

What do lush tropical rainforests, pristine white sand beaches, towering snow-capped mountains, raging ice-cold rivers and verdant undulating fields have in common? In my experience, the practice of librarianship. Fellow ALIA members have recently employed their professional expertise in Samoa and Vanuatu. My experience of crossing borders as a librarian has taken me to Cameroon (1992-1999), France (off and on 1992-1999) and, most recently, Tajikistan (July-August 2010).

In Tajikistan “libraries without walls” took on a new nuance. Faced with technology infrastructure and support challenges, we decided to host the library database out-of-country, in the Ukraine. This provided up-to-date server space and software expertise, and transformed the library into a thoroughly international venture.

Part of the fulfilment that comes with cross-cultural librarianship is finding ways over (or around) hurdles we do not normally face in our familiar Western environment. Infrastructure inadequacies come immediately to mind (for example, lack of reliable access to electricity and internet), though my observation is that those are less of a problem as time goes on. Other challenges include language barriers (communicating with co-workers, understanding the library resources and manipulating operating systems with unfamiliar interface languages), limited funding, and unpredictable skills and expectations of local staff.

The benefits of professional engagement in this environment are multiple. There is nothing so focussing as the prospect of passing on the essentials of librarianship in the space of six weeks (in one instance for me, one week). This forces an evaluation of what it means to manage information in the new context. Close work with local colleagues draws you into the culture more profoundly than a more fleeting tourist visit. Then there are all the exotic sights, tastes, smells and people supplying ample material for many stories and reflections into the future... and which enrich you as a person. It also provides an opportunity to contribute in situations which are often overlooked back home and an avenue to practice an outward-looking professionalism.

For each challenge, solutions are available. This year, I appreciated more than ever the benefits of email communication, open source software and remote hosting.

However, the transition from perceiving a challenge to finding a solution was at times a stressful, intimidating and tedious one.

It has occurred to me that more could be done to promote cross-cultural librarianship and offer support to those heading out on such ventures. To this end, I propose we form an Australian ‘Librarians without borders’ (see the Canadian one at http://lwb-online.org/). If you’re interested, please contact me at i.stoodley@qut.edu.au. Together we can achieve much in a diversity of circumstances, both in Australia and beyond.

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Tips for new players

Whether travelling on a study tour or embarking on a longer expedition to work in-country on an international development (foreign aid) project, there are lots of traps for newcomers.

Craig Boaden has pulled together a few pointers for those just starting out, gained firsthand through his work as an information manager at the AusAID Centre for Pacific Development And Training in the 1990s and through participation in several short term international development missions to southern Africa, Samoa, Fiji, and the Solomon Islands. Here are his top tips for embarking on your big adventure:

Find out about the culture before going
This is obvious - what is less obvious is that you will have to unlearn and modify some of that information during your stay. Be flexible and be prepared to find that some developing societies are changing faster than many developed countries.

Go with humility
Don’t go in as a missionary or a teacher (unless of course that’s your job!). Don’t assume the West is best – it ain’t necessarily so. You are in-country to provide help and another perspective, and you will be valued for your contribution and yourself. Expect to learn as much as anyone else in the team, maybe more. Be open to new friends and colleagues, new work situations, new experiences, and new ways of looking at things. These are some of the greatest intangible joys of working in another culture. When I first arrived in Samoa, I tore around at the same speed I did at home, grumbling under my breath at the road conditions. Eventually I realised I wasn’t in a tearing hurry and didn’t need to speed everywhere. So I slowed right down, and enjoyed the country much more.

Be respectful and patient
Other countries’ cultures may look on time and ‘progress’ in a different way to what you might be used to. In many developing countries there is a consensual decision-making culture evolved over centuries to acknowledge everyone and minimise conflict. Take heed of what is accepted and expected. If it’s too slow for you - tough luck! It is you who’ll need to change; don’t expect other people to ‘see the light’.

Modify your expectations
They’re called ‘developing countries’. That can mean a range of things, but in general, you should expect to be working with fewer resources, of all types, than you had at home. This can be frustrating if you let it get to you. However, you’d be surprised what can be done with what’s at hand. And you may be able to identify extra sources of funding or other assistance. Many challenges will take a long time to solve, but every little helps. For example, training is an important and ongoing issue, which nevertheless can be improved with better sharing of ideas or on the job training, with no great influx of cash. Training includes mentoring, too. People in developing countries have a great ability to make do with what’s at hand, which many Australians do too. Use what you have to its fullest before wishing for something better. And remember, ‘development’ does not always equal ‘growth’.

Watch out for cultural misunderstandings
Some of these will occur in any case. The important thing is to react positively when they do happen and move on with no hard feelings. There are ways to minimise mishaps. For example, in some societies it is considered impolite to tell someone ‘no’. This can lead to misunderstandings. Therefore, don’t ask for agreement, ask instead what others think, or want to do, or present a number of options everyone can comment and reach consensus on. Patience is useful in these situations.

Get to know the country and its people
Try to meet and mix with people from the country in which you work, and not just those with whom you work. This can be difficult but is very worthwhile and enjoyable. Don’t spend all your spare time with the expat community; after all, if you wanted to meet more Australians there are heaps of them right here. See if your employer would allow you to do some touring around the country – it will help you in your work and is very interesting and enjoyable too. And ask your colleagues to show you around.

Have fun!
Above all, have fun, learn a lot, make a contribution and use the experience to enrich your life.

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And Laurie Urane, currently travelling, emailed in Cite some more very practical advice for those contemplating a study tour overseas:

- Try to get your employer’s backing for your trip and arrange to reciprocate any extra leave without pay or other support by providing a published report of your trip, presentations to staff etc
- Check out the international conference schedule and if you can time your travel to take in one (or more) of these, make the most of the opportunities. If you are headed towards Europe, the British Council and Goethe Institute are very helpful
- Prepare a detailed itinerary and check that you will actually have time to get from point A to point B in your schedule - cluster visits if you can, it helps a lot with time management
- Make contact before you leave with everyone you will be meeting and talking to, and double check those commitments before you leave
- Arrange your accommodation ahead of your departure
- Check all visa requirements and get travel insurance
- If your trip is part holiday, part work or study, make sure you know what you can claim and keep your receipts for expenses plus a detailed travel diary because your accountant will need this to claim for you
- Write your report as you go and take pictures to go with it – this makes it much easier to complete reports when you get home and helps you remember everything

Laurie Urane
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Resources
The Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) website www.ausaid.gov.au is a good source on official Australian overseas development assistance (ODA), and has good country resources too.
After slaving all year over a hot laptop (must be time for another battery recall) in some of the world’s seediest airport lounges (Los Angeles, Lagos, Canberra), it was a thrill to check gmail and see that October’s missive had finally generated some controversy.

If I have a regret though, it is that the October article neglected to mention the encouraging work of the Re-conceptualising and Re-positioning Australian Library And Information Science Education For The Twenty-First Century Project (http://www.liseducation.org.au/).

This timely and potentially significant study acknowledges that “the current approach to LIS education in Australia lacks cohesion and sustainability”. The result is that Australian LIS education “ultimately fails to effectively or efficiently provide a diverse supply of graduates with the attributes required for professional practice in the rapidly changing twenty-first century.” No arguments there.

The Re-conceptualising and Re-positioning Project seeks to address this problem by providing “guidance on how best to re-position and re-shape Australian LIS education to ensure it remains dynamic, responsive and sustainable to the evolving information age”.

With such a worthy goal in mind, it is disappointing that the project appears to lack influential sponsors within the government and higher education sectors, and its intended outcomes give no clear indication as to whom or what will do the spadework of implementation.

Perhaps the promised framework and accompanying action plan for “sustainable LIS education in Australia” will be sufficient catalyst for peak bodies like ALIA to engage with government and universities, individually and collectively, to facilitate meaningful change. Time will tell but I hope pre-emptive action is taken before the economics of higher education intrude.

By way of contrast, as I write this column, our colleagues in New Zealand are putting the final touches to their Centennial Conference in Dunedin. LIANZA’s milestone is to be warmly celebrated on both sides of the Tasman.

In the hundred years since LIANZA was formed, we in Australia have learned much from the library profession in New Zealand, and they (I hope) from us. In my case, it was from the disturbing claim by the National Library of New Zealand, “the library profession has much in common with its scientific colleagues. Long before social media introduced us to a bewildering global jamboree of ‘peeps’, librarians have talked and worked across national borders – sharing resources, ideas and support.”

As a start, the formation of an Australasian Association of Library and Information Professionals (AALIP) would increase diversity and economies of scale in professional development. Since the departure of CAVAL from the library training scene in late 2008, the underlying lack of choice, cohesion and direction in library professional development, principally in Australia, has become sadly evident. Minor players are opportunistically tinkering at the margins, sometimes in tandem with ALIA, but the overall effect is inchoate – there is no evidence of anyone having a grand plan or vision, let alone the business acumen to get something happening.

Since 2007, LIANZA has embraced compulsory professional development for members through its Professional Registration Scheme. While the transition to professional registration has not been without its problems and critics, its implementation is proceeding and will be to the long term advantage of the profession in New Zealand. A merger might provide Australian colleagues with the same opportunities and advantages.

A merger would also provide the perfect opportunity to reorganise and reposition the business of our two professional associations by relocating the new joint head office from the rarefied atmospheres of Canberra and Wellington to somewhere more accessible for members – like Port Moresby for example.

What better time too for us to overhaul membership categories and reinvigorate engagement with members, particularly mid and late career colleagues who have become largely disenfranchised from ALIA – renewing their ‘associate’ membership each year (if they renew) out of a misplaced sense of duty, rather than any genuine appreciation for the Association.

Finally, moving to an Australasian Association (Society/Institute) of Library and Information Professionals would create an international organisation in the South-West Pacific with more capacity to influence state and national governments, and work with aid organisations such as AusAid to the betterment of the profession and communities across the region. In this respect, LIANZA’s work in Fiji and other Pacific nations serves as a model for providing greater practical assistance to colleagues in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.

New Zealand historian Matthew Wright believes his country came within a whisker of becoming the seventh state of Australia in 1901 (Fantastic Pasts: Imaginary Adventures in New Zealand History.)

Perhaps, 110 years on, it is now time for the library profession to show the way and ‘bridge the ditch’. If there’s pavlova and professional development in it, I’ll be there!

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Parliaments of the Pacific go online with Australian support

The Australian Parliament has a focus on the Pacific region, particularly through the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA). In addition to promoting bilateral relations, the Parliament provides a considerable amount of training and equipment to Pacific parliaments and the Parliamentary Relations Office (PRO) provides a regional secretariat to support both Australian and Pacific branches of the CPA. This encompasses support for a range of conferences, seminars and visits both at the regional and the individual branch levels and includes its general support is training for other parliaments.

In recent years, a key focus has been assisting Pacific Parliaments to develop their websites with a view to improving access to these resources. The idea is to help populate the site, make it live with the help of the local service provider and then train a person to maintain it. It’s a significant achievement to see each Parliament join the virtual network, especially given each assignment is completed with just a week on location.

I was fortunate to have been given several assignments in the Pacific developing the parliamentary websites for the islands of Kiribati, Cook Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu and Nauru between 2007 and 2009.

The initial work is done back in Canberra with a shelf of the website being created, following a considerable amount of correspondence with staff in the Parliament to work out what was needed. Information such as - was Hansard available electronically, did they have internet access, and was there a service provider on the island?

My first visit was to Kiribati in 2007. It was great landing on this lovely island with picture perfect scenes of beaches, locals fishing and children everywhere. The Parliament building was a pleasant surprise, appearing as sails on a narrow part of the island with the sea sparking in the background. Inside it was deliciously cool and the best thing was the wireless setup in the building which made life so much easier for access to the outside world. I set about firstly finding just what material was available electronically and what my contact Eni Tekenene (Deputy Clerk) wanted to see on the site. The next step was to meet with the service provider in the town – that being a tiny collection of businesses and administration buildings. The material available electronically was very limited so a lot of typing took place over the first few days.

It was not all hard work though - one thing I did look forward to each day was driving to and from the Parliament building along a narrow road with a speed limit of 40kmh, taking in the wonderful scenes of life in the villages. Mass on Sunday at the Catholic cathedral was so colourful, with the most beautiful singing by the congregation and the wonderful sight of everyone dressed in their best. Dinner at the High Commissioner’s was an added delight. The best thing though was when the site went live a couple - one weeks after my visit (http://www.parliament.gov.ki/about.htm).

My next trip was to the Cook Islands and Raratonga. Again, I went in for just over a week, and as in Kiribati I had corresponded with the Parliament ahead of my visit, in particular with Isaac Solomona (Editor of Debates), so I had a site ready to be developed as soon as I arrived. As we had learnt from other locations, negotiations with the service provider was our first priority, ensuring they would be able to host the site as soon as it was completed. The Parliament building being situated on the beach (and Parliament being in recess) did my work in the Prime Minister’s office amidst the scent of perfumed flowers and the sounds of chickens wandering along the beach front and the surf rolling in behind. All went well and the site was live just as I was departing (http://www.parliament.gov.ck/).

Tonga was the next assignment for this program. Tonga is in fact an archipelago of 176 islands with the capital in Nuku’alofa. This time, I was walking to and from work along roads lined with rainforest trees dripping with vines, being greeted continually by the people along my path. By now, our model for website development was well-practiced and all the arrangements for setting up the Parliament’s website were in place ahead of my visit, managed by Sione Tekiteki (Deputy Clerk & Legal Advisor) and the staff. Tonga’s website joined the growing community of online Parliaments just after I finished my visit (http://parliament.gov.to/).

Vanuatu has also been a recipient of assistance through this program. The capital, Port Vila, is where the Parliament meets and the building is quite splendid, being poised on the side of a cliff looking over the sea. I worked closely with Leiivia Moli, the Parliamentary Librarian, to produce the website (http://www.parliament.gov.vu/). There was just enough time to include a wander through the 24-hour fruit and vegetable markets and nearby waterfalls and villages, the very interesting museum and, of course, indulge myself just a little with French baguettes and cheeses.

My last trip for 2009 was to Nauru in October of that year and proved to be immensely rewarding. The Parliamentary Counsel, Katy Le Roy, was my contact there and following seven solid days of work we had the website up and running. Despite being heavily pregnant Katy had enormous drive - which was quite infectious - helping us to keep going through the long hours required to produce the website (http://www.naurugov.nr/parliament/index.html) in the allotted time. Once more the site was up and running shortly after my visit and is being well maintained today.

I loved every minute of my trips and felt honoured to be able to provide assistance in helping our fellow professionals and the islands in their growth.

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Singapor on show

The libraries of Singapore were the focus of a recent study tour led by the State Library of Western Australia. The tour group included a mix of state and local library staff, learning services staff and a library studies student, travelling to Singapore from Western Australia, South Australia and Victoria.

The tour began at the National Library for an overview of the role of the National Library Board (NLB) and their business services, a tour of the building and an introduction to the very successful NLB Academy, which has responsibility for the continuing learning and development of NLB staff as well as corporate customers. This was followed by a visit to the Library Supply Centre (LSC), which houses the Library Support Services Division of the NLB and has responsibility for acquisitions, cataloguing, and processing of all items, as well as being a repository for Used Collections (collections that are used less frequently). The LSC provides services to NLB libraries and external corporate customers.

The Jurong Regional Library provided us with an overview of public library services in Singapore, together with a wealth of information about the many programs offered to readers of all ages. Service offerings for children include the 10,000 Fathers Reading Program, kidsREAD, Quest, Fun with Tots, and Born-to-Read, as well as storytime and school outreach programs. We also heard about services for young people including READ! Singapore, Read and Reap, and What I Want the World to Read programs. Before departing Jurong Library we were fortunate to have a look at ‘Molly, the Mobile Library’. ‘Molly’ visits institutions and organizations such as children’s homes, special education schools, and selected primary schools to promote reading and lifelong learning. ‘Molly’ contains a targeted collection of over 3,000 items and is wireless-enabled to allow for all regular library transactions.

Our next visit was to the Library@esplanade, the Performing Arts Library. This boutique library is Singapore’s first public library for the performing arts (music, dance, theatre and film) and is located at the bay at Marina Centre. The library comprises four ‘villages’ for music, dance, theatre and film, and features an exhibition space, a performing stage, a practice room, screening rooms, a dance alley and a café as well as a café inside the library. The view from the window was simply breathtaking, and included the new Singapore casino building in the Marina as well as the Singapore Flyer.

The Republic Polytechnic Library is located within the Woodlands Campus, Singapore. This library is divided into five zones, including an open gallery space in the central zone used for art installations and other performances. After leading a very hectic pace for several days, we were particularly impressed with the leg massaging chairs provided for use by library staff, and following rigorous testing of the chairs agreed that these would be a great innovation for Australia.

Our final visit was to the Cheng San Community Library, located in a shopping mall. Mall libraries are the smallest libraries in Singapore, with little seating for patrons. With a floor area of 1467sqm, Cheng San had a children’s section, activities room for children, adult and young people’s section, reference collection, multimedia services and self-check borrowing stations, and of the libraries we visited this was the one that most closely resembled Australian public libraries.

Throughout the study tour we were very impressed with the generosity of our Singapore colleagues - their hospitality, willingness to share information and patience with our many questions. The study group also concluded that another huge benefit of the tour had been the intra- and interstate sharing that occurred throughout the week. We all finished the study tour with many new friends and a greatly enhanced knowledge about each other’s library services.

QUT hosts leading information literacy researcher

Dr Louise Limberg is an international leader in the field of information literacy and learning. Professor Emerita at the University of Borås in Sweden and Adjunct Professor at QUT, Dr Limberg is currently in Australia to present a series of seminars and contribute to a Doctoral Consortium. She will be visiting QUT between November 2010 and January 2011 to work with staff and students in the Information Studies Group and will also be spending time at Charles Sturt University.

Since 1981 Dr Limberg has been working at the Swedish School of Library and Information Science, University of Borås. With a record of successful research funding totalling over AUD$3,000,000 for multiple projects focusing on information literacy in educational settings, Dr Limberg specialises in the application of interpretive and qualitative research methods to these fields. She also chairs the International Information Literacies Research Network which has a strong European and Australian membership.

Some recent publications include:


Dr Limberg’s current work is focussed on the digital environment in school and professional settings and QUT hopes this visit will strengthen already existing contacts and collaboration between our research groups in Australia and Sweden. Most importantly of course, we hope she will find time to enjoy Australian culture, climate and hospitality.

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International engagement provides a PD opportunity for regional professionals

Even with the sophisticated communications we now have, isolation is still a constant issue that my colleagues and I must deal with working in small special libraries such as my own at the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA), located in North Queensland. Our regional ALIA group (TropicALIA) works extremely hard to get visiting experts to call, and to arrange local professional development opportunities, but there are still many development opportunities that just don’t exist for regional professionals.

Becoming involved with the international Group of Experts on Marine Information Management (GE-MIM) has greatly assisted me with my professional development. The group has continually exposed me to technological innovations long before they have appeared in more general library discussions. The other members of this committee are vastly experienced librarians, and often run large libraries, such as the US NOAA Library Services, University of Southampton Libraries, and Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution. To be working with such knowledgeable professionals who are so willing to share their knowledge and expertise is a rare privilege.

GE-MIM is a technical advisory committee of UNESCO’s Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC). In 1999, I was invited to be the Australasian representative this committee which comprises eight librarians with specialist expertise and background in marine and environmental libraries and information management. Our parent is the International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange (IODE), a major program of the IOC.

The role of this team is to outline, review and prioritize tasks for implementation under IODE activities and work on specific marine science information issues. We are required to:

- identify and highlight technological developments in information management to the IODE
- identify opportunities and assist the IODE with capacity building, resource sharing and networking in marine information centres in a world regional context
- identify and build strong working relations with other relevant organizations, such as the World Meteorological Organization, and the International Association of Aquatic and Marine Science Libraries and Information Centers (IAMSLIC), with a view to developing joint projects and sharing expertise

Since its establishment in 1984, GE-MIM has supported and initiated many projects to improve capability of IOC member states to benefit from and participate in marine information networks and services. Examples of recent projects are:

- development of OceanTeacher, a web-based educational tool for marine information professionals
- OceanDocs, an internationally regarded e-repository of marine digital publications
- OceanExpert, a directory of marine and aquatic experts
- development and support of regional Oceanographic Data and Information Networks (ODIN)s to improve access to ocean data and information, develop technical skills, and develop infrastructure for archiving and dissemination of information; to date, networks have been developed in Africa (ODINAFRICA), Latin America (ODINCARSAL), and Eastern Europe (ODECET)

Our most recent successes have been in the Pacific, with a regional network (ODINPIMRIS) of marine and environmental libraries being established in 2008. Since then the network has launched its own website, a Pacific Islands Marine Portal, and a PIMRIS Regional Repository. We have also undertaken a number of capacity building exercises in the region, which continue to go from strength to strength.

Many hundreds of library professionals from developing countries have benefited greatly from their involvement with, and support of, GE-MIM – that’s why we do it. They have learned new skills, and developed contacts with other librarians in their own countries and regions. Their status in their own agencies and their countries has also grown considerably.

The benefits of my involvement with GE-MIM have been great, both professionally and personally for me, and also for my parent agency. Through GBRMPA’s support of a week of my time each year to attend meetings and training workshops, I have come back more knowledgeable professional because of GE-MIM’s input into my professional development. I am then able to alert my agency to innovations in marine science and information management and GBRMPA becomes aware of what’s happening in the world. It has also strengthened GBRMPA’s regard in international arenas of marine park management and marine science.

My experience with international engagement has added great richness to my professional life. I believe that I have made a positive difference. Some of what I have been fortunate to learn from the many that have gone before me has been passed on to others in need. It feels worthwhile.

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Building Strong Library Associations - Australians play major role

Over the past year, IFLA has been working on the development of a new and ambitious training program for developing the capacity of library associations around the world. The Building Strong Library Associations (BSLA) program is underpinned by IFLA’s vision “to enrich society and the library and information profession by building strong, sustainable library associations” and Australian librarians are at the forefront.

The principal goal of the BSLA program is help library associations and their members work towards the improvement of services to library users, to provide equitable access to information and to develop the library and information profession.

The program comprises a modular and customisable training package that focuses on library association development. It is aimed at library association workers, who may include leaders and office bearers, staff and volunteers. Parts of the program can also be adapted for delivery to wider stakeholder groups such as politicians, government officials and organisations working with library associations. Through cascade training, the initial participants in the courses will develop the skills and knowledge of their colleagues and associates within their own library communities.

Five modules have been developed:
- Library Associations in Society
- Building Your Library Association
- Sustaining Your Library Association
- Developing Strategic Relationships: Partnerships and Fundraising
- Libraries on the Agenda

Additional modules have been drawn from other areas of IFLA training, specifically on Library Statistics for Advocacy and Copyright for Library Associations. The training materials have been designed for flexibility; the participants will be drawn from very diverse cultures, with different learning needs and diverse learning styles. Translation work will be undertaken to ensure that the materials can be effectively used with a wide range of language groups. An online platform has been developed to provide members with access to the learning materials.

The Australian library community is making a significant contribution to the BSLA program. The program is delivered through IFLA’s Action for Development through Libraries Program (ALP), coordinated by Fiona Bradley. Fiona is energetically managing all aspects of the BSLA project as it is rolled out in each country - an immense and challenging task. Together with a group of experts from a number of associations and countries, the content of the training modules was developed by Angela Bridgland and Christine Goodacre, who made virtual collaboration an art form. Additional material, in the form of 20 case studies on library association strategies and achievements, were prepared by Gill Hallam, supported by Deb Ponting as research assistant. This work was enlightening – it was just fascinating to prepare these case studies that illustrated the world of library association activities, from ethical issues in Thailand and strategic alliances in Uganda to succession planning in American Indian library communities.

The first countries to take part in the programme are diverse: Lebanon, Cameroon and Peru. With the support of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation’s Global Libraries Initiative the programme will also be rolled out in Botswana, Lithuania and Ukraine. A further three countries will be selected in 2011, including one from the Asia-Pacific region. Each country has a core trainer appointed by IFLA, supported by in-country facilitators from the organising team. The core trainers include former IFLA Presidents, Claudia Lux and Kay Raseroka, and library association executive Winnie Vitzansky (recently retired from the Danish Library Association). The core trainers all met for their own training sessions at the IFLA conference in Gothenburg, Sweden, in August 2010.

Gill Hallam, current director and past president of ALIA, has been invited by IFLA to serve as the core trainer for the BSLA activities in Ukraine following the sad and untimely passing of Bob McKee, just a few months before his planned retirement from CILIP and the beginning of his involvement with the BSLA program. Gill is also a member of the IFLA Standing Committee for the Section for Education and Training and is Convenor of the E-Learning Special Interest Group. Her new role takes Australia’s involvement in the BSLA program from design and development to course delivery. Gill’s work with the Ukraine Library Association will commence in early 2011.

Together with colleagues from around the world, the intellectual, educational and managerial contribution of the Australian library community to the BSLA program is recognised at an international level.

... the intellectual, educational and managerial contribution of the Australian library community to the BSLA program is recognised at an international level.
ALIA Study Grant helps Sydney libraries plan future music collections

In 2008 I was fortunate to be the recipient of the ALIA 2008 Study Grant Award which gave me the opportunity to travel overseas and visit libraries in Sweden (Stockholm and Gavle), Switzerland (Basel) and the UK (London, Gateshead and various other British Libraries) and then on to New York and Chicago.

My aim was to investigate the feasibility of setting up a free public music library for the City of Sydney, by researching and then observing best practice first hand and interacting with professional colleagues, mainly those I had met when attending the International Association of Music Libraries, Archives and Documentation Centres (IAML) Conference in Sydney in 2007. The organisation currently has about 2,000 individual and institutional members in some 45 countries throughout the world.

Founded in 1951 to promote international cooperation and to support the interests of the profession, IAML is a respected member of the international library and music communities. It has national branches in 22 countries, five professional branches, four subject commissions and various working groups, and is responsible for several large-scale documentation projects. The membership comprises major music collections, music and audio-visual librarians, music archivists and documentation specialists, musicologists, music publishers and dealers and so covers a wide range of expertise.

So it was at this conference, as a result of this face to face professional interaction, that my dream of being able to ‘marry’ my two great loves, public libraries and music, was born. I became acutely aware how common it was for the major cities all over the world to have a public music library and how much they were contributing to the culture and musical life of their respective countries.

During the conference I was able to show some of the delegates (from Sweden, Switzerland, the UK and South Africa,) our City of Sydney Library Service, in particular our Custom’s House branch and my branch at Glebe. I also spent many pleasant social hours with them, where we discussed many exciting professional initiatives which gave me even more inspiration.

Having been involved in ALIA for over forty years and being a great believer in the value of networking with other colleagues, the chance to widen my sphere of communication by joining IAML was too good an opportunity to miss. I kept in touch by email and Facebook with the particular contacts I had made, as we had become friends as well as colleagues. This made it very easy for me to plan my itinerary for my research and to be made to feel so welcome when I visited these same colleagues and their libraries. Their amazing hospitality and willingness to share their professional knowledge with me can never be overestimated.

I visited as many different types of music libraries as I could, as I wanted to compare the more traditional music library services with the current trends overseas of attaching a public music library to a performance complex such as in Gavle and Gateshead.

I also explored the latest developments in, and use of, technology eg. digitisation which is now providing access to library collections on a global scale, online reference resources, downloading and streaming, podcasts, software and hardware that can turn a PC into a recording studio.

As a result of my experiences I have been asked by the Library Manager to prepare a report for future music provision for the City of Sydney Library Service, embracing new technological developments and the digital age (such as is happening at ExploreMusic in Gateshead) and looking at what hard copy resources we still need to collect such as scores and CDs.

Professional associations such as ALIA and IAML have been invaluable to me as through these associations I have been able to meet and subsequently network with colleagues from all over the world. I am a strong believer in face to face professional communication and interaction. Conferences, workshops and meetings provide this interaction. Through their publications, internet sites and electronic communication they make it so much easier to keep up with international trends and developments. I particularly depend on electronic databases for journal and newspaper articles, websites and newsfeeds and regularly communicate via email with colleagues and organisations. Face-book and Linked-in are invaluable tools, however I am yet to embark on other Web 2.0 (or 3.0?) provision such as Twitter, mainly owing to time restraints.

Travelling has been a wonderful way to widen my professional outlook. I have seen so many amazing libraries and met so many committed librarians with a passion for their work, which has been totally inspirational. I have also realised that basically we are all convinced of our worth by looking towards embracing change and keeping libraries and librarians in the forefront of the information and educational, recreational and cultural life of our respective countries.

My full report submitted to ALIA earlier this year gives a detailed account of my findings. My adventures are also recorded on my blog: http://muslibproject.blogspot.com/

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To find out more about ALIA Study Grants, visit our website: http://www.alia.org.au/awards/study.grant/

Supporting new professionals in memory of Bob McKee

Readers may remember reading of the passing of Bob McKee at the IFLA conference. Now, the International Association of Library Associations (IFLA) and the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP), with the support of Bob’s family, have launched the Aspire Award in his memory. Bob McKee was Chief Executive of CILIP, the leading professional body for the library and information sector in the UK, and is warmly remembered for his support and encouragement of new professionals. The Aspire Award will provide bursaries for new professionals to attend CILIP and IFLA conferences. In the first year, this will include support for a new professional from the Ukraine, a country in which Bob had a special interest. After two years, the international bursary will be available to the whole library community. It is hoped that the bursary will be funded by donations, which can be made either through CILIP or IFLA.

The Aspire Award was officially launched on October 28, which would have been the day of Bob’s official retirement party in the UK. For more information: Ingeborg Verheul, Communications and Services Director, IFLA, email ingeborg.verheul@ifla.org.
Help with library needs of international and offshore students

When we heard that Incite was having a themed issue on international connections and engagement, it seemed the perfect opportunity to tell library colleagues about the IDP Database of Research on International Education. Established in 2003, the IDP Database is used by people in the international education industry for research and reading on the issues they face working with international students. For library and information professionals dealing with international and offshore students’ needs, this database may well have resources to help.

The aim of the IDP Database is to bring together from disparate sources, and make easily accessible, a solid selection of the research outputs from numerous disciplines with an interest in the international student industry – education naturally, but also extending to fields such as economics, marketing, immigration, psychology, and tourism.

The database indexes books, articles, theses and reports on international education topics – international students, transnational education, export education, study abroad, student recruitment, international schools, and offshore programs. It is international in coverage, indexing publications from around the world, with the majority of content coming from the major education exporting countries – the US, UK, New Zealand, Canada and Australia.

The IDP Database is funded as a free service to all by IDP Education Pty Ltd, first established by Australian universities in 1969 and now a global company offering student placement and English language testing services. The database is produced for IDP by the Indexing Services team of Cunningham Library, Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). Cunningham Library also produce the Australian Education Index, the Australasian Education Directory, and the DE Hub Database of Research on Distance Education, while ACER is more widely known for its publishing through ACER Press and its work on educational assessment programs like PISA and NAPLAN.

The IDP Database has fostered connections between individual researchers around the world as they have discovered the work of others, and presented their own, via the IDP Database. This has lead to collaborations, speaking invitations and publishing opportunities, and further research in this specialist area. Cunningham Library staff attended the recent Australian International Education Conference in Sydney, where papers presented highlighted the depth and breadth of research now being undertaken into what is now one of Australia’s biggest exports - education. It was an additional thrill for staff to meet ‘in real life’ a number of recent and long term users of the database from interstate and overseas.

Content includes articles specifically on international and offshore student needs as library users (plug in librar* to have a browse) and PhD theses by Australian librarians who have conducted research into international student topics. Check them out at [http://www.idp.com/research/database_of_research.aspx](http://www.idp.com/research/database_of_research.aspx) and stay in touch with new international education research at [http://twitter.com/idpdrie](http://twitter.com/idpdrie).

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Thinking about going overseas or just arrived in Australia and seeking work?

Reciprocal arrangements: UK and US qualified library and information professionals

Ever thought about travelling overseas to United States or United Kingdom and wanted to work as a professional librarian but don’t know how to go about it? ALIA has reciprocal recognition agreements with the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) and the American Library Association (ALA) / Canadian Library Association (CLA). Under reciprocal arrangements with the UK, USA/Canada holders of graduate level qualifications accredited by these associations are eligible for ALIA Associate (librarian) membership and may apply for positions advertised at librarian level in Australia. IFLA provide a mailing list for librarians and information professionals seeking employment. To subscribe to the list or post a vacancy yourself, go to libjobs@infoserv.inist.fr. There is a list of overseas employment agencies on the ALIA website http://www.alia.org.au/employment/links.html.

Other overseas qualifications

Qualifications from other countries may also be recognised by ALIA for work at librarian and library technician level in Australia. To be considered for work as a librarian in Australia, you need to hold, as a minimum, a qualification equivalent to an Australian Bachelor degree. For library technician work, you need to hold a Diploma or other qualification in library and information studies equivalent to a Level 5 qualification in the Australian Qualifications Framework. As the standards body, ALIA is responsible for assessing the content of your qualification together with your work experience to determine your readiness to work in the Australian library and information sector and an assessment by VETASSESS will be required to establish your current equivalent qualification level.

For further information on qualification recognition, contact education@alia.org.au or 02 6215 8222.

The Vietnam connection

RMIT University Library, through RMIT International University Vietnam, has been an active partner in the development of several educational facilities supporting teaching and learning in other institutions in Vietnam. The projects, all with a library focus, have included project management to develop new learning resource centres in established universities and a number of projects with the National Library of Vietnam including the translation of DDC 14th abridged and the recent introduction of cataloguing in publication. A number of RMIT University Library staff have provided time and expertise to the projects and have worked in Vietnam for periods of weeks and months depending upon the scope of the project.

Bernadene Sward, Manager Design and Social Context Liaison Team, has visited Vietnam at least a dozen times over the past five years, providing advice and support to projects with the National Library and consulting or working with the learning centres in Can Tho, Hue, Da Nang and particularly Thai Nguyen. The projects have been funded by the Atlantic Philanthropies education program and have helped the Vietnamese library community to grow and prosper as they build capacity and strengthen student-centred learning and teaching practice.

For Bernadene the experience has been a mix of pleasure (working with people who are engaged and eager to learn) and long days and nights of hard work in a complex and stimulating environment. The experience has taught her that while we may all aspire to global standards, the proof is in their application.

“I can recall many meetings and workshops where international partners would expound the benefits of the Western system and in the end, after exhibiting patience and resolve, the local participants would politely respond ‘we will do it our way’,” Bernadene says.

“In my view it’s easy to talk about the way our system works but not so easy to craft a model that incorporates a way of working which will build upon the complex array of cultural, socio-economic and political agendas and imperatives - that’s been my lesson and daily guide.”

This year a number of our staff members have been engaged directly with RMIT International University Vietnam librarians in a staff development project designed to align services to those of a modern Western university. The project is jointly funded by RMIT University, Melbourne and RMIT Vietnam, which has modern and growing campuses in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi. As these are English language only it is possible for us to engage relatively easily.

The Equipping Librarians project includes face-to-face workshops in Vietnam, visits by several Vietnam staff to Melbourne, online discussions and informal coaching. The percentage of staff with professional library qualifications is higher at our Vietnam campuses than in Australia, but many courses studied lack significant input on customer service, reference, and information literacy so we have focussed on these areas. We have really enjoyed engaging with colleagues in another country and sharing cultural information and professional practice.

We hope to maintain the momentum at the conclusion of this one-year project by having buddy relationships and occasional online forum discussions. An interesting aspect of this project has been the need to make explicit the knowledge which has become intuitive for us and to attempt to shine a light on the probable assumptions and expectations which lie behind the predominantly Western university executives’ view of the library and its services.

It is a privilege to be able to work overseas and it does enrich and alter our professional perspective.

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The Heir of Night
Helen Lowe
Orbit, 2010
RRP: $24.99

The Heir of Night is an engaging read that elegantly draws the reader into the life of Malian, the heir of night. Lowe delivers a well-crafted tale that not only introduces us to the likeable Malian but also delicately reveals layers of increasing complexity within the plotline, as Malian begins to discover her heritage and potential by facing the ancient enemy of her people, “the swarm”. As Malian progresses on her journey of self-discovery, the reader follows, discovering the vibrant and rich world of Lowe’s creation. This is an excellent read for pre-teen, teen, and young adult readers who are fans of the genre and despite content, themes, and language suitable for younger audiences adult readers may find it equally engaging.

The richness, depth, and the gradual revelation of the world’s complexity will appeal to many readers. However, at times the flow of the storyline seems a little jerky as suspense is built up to a climax only to be followed by slower, almost uneventful chapters. This weakness aside, The Heir of Night is an excellent read and a stunning introduction to The Wall of Night series and I am sure many readers will eagerly await the sequel.

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Beneath the pale blue burqa: one woman’s journey through Taliban strongholds
Author: Kay Danes
Publisher: Big Sky Publishing, 2010
ISBN: 9780980658286
RRP: $34.99

Kay Danes tells a truly powerful story of travelling through the Taliban strongholds and the rare places journalists and the world cameras never dare to visit or explain to westerners. Having survived an 11 month hostage ordeal in Laos and the longing to see their children, husband and wife Kay and Kerry Danes remained determined to piece back together family life; Kerry returning to active duty with the Special Forces and Kay embarking on a humanitarian aid mission venturing beyond the safe zones in war torn Afghanistan to develop small initiatives delivering life changing opportunities to Afghan communities.

As a leading international humanitarian, Kay has presented much needed focus on the struggles of Afghan communities and especially women and children in the remote wastelands of Al Qaeda terrorists through this book. Her own inspirational insight - from within places no-one dares to venture and most wish simply to ignore - proves the strength, courage and sacrifice of those creating social justice in a world of terrorism. Grip your seat as you relive Kay and her companion’s ordeal as they drive the ancient Silk Road amidst kidnappings, suicide bombings, carnage and chaos.

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Serious Men
Manu Joseph
John Murray, 2010
ISBN: 9781848543126
RRP: $32.99

Ayyan Mani and Arvind Acharya seem like opposites to the reader at first. Ayyan is from the untouchable Dalit caste, and is the clerk to Arvind, a genius from the Brahmin caste who runs the Institute of Theory and Research, a scientific institution dedicated to the “pursuit of truth.” To Arvind, this pursuit culminates in the search for microscopic aliens high in the earth’s atmosphere. Ayyan is less concerned with truth, and more concerned with elevating his own stature through the genius of his son, whether this genius is in fact true or not. Initially engaged in an intricate game of caste rivalry, the effect that the beautiful young scientist Oparna has on Arvind, and then the Institute, results in the game turning to political and academic one-upmanship and Ayyan finds himself playing on a much larger scale. But will he balance or will he fall? This is a wonderful novel, an engaging read with sometimes harsh insights into the caste culture of India, the politics of academia, the search for extra-terrestrial life, and ultimately male comradeship and respect for actions and intelligence outside of the social system. A must read.

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Willingly into the Fray: One hundred years of Australian nursing

Editor: Catherine McCullagh
Publisher: Big Sky Publishing, 2010
ISBN: 9780980658262
RRP: $34.99

Willingly into the Fray encapsulates the essence and experience of the past 100 years of Australian nursing with stories from both RAANC veterans and current serving members. Many of the stories explore truly Australian characteristics with humour and heart-warming statements complementing the strong historical context of Australian nursing. Personal recollections are collected in sections including the The Boer War, World War I, World War II, The Korean War, The Malayan Emergency, The Vietnam War, Gulf War I, Cambodia, Somalia, Rwanda, Bougainville, East Timor, Gulf War II, Banda Aceh, accompanied by photos from the RAANC archives.

This first compilation for Cathy McCullagh, an experienced military army officer, is a celebration of the dedication of Australian nurses. Willingly into the Fray is an enjoyable appreciation of the nursing profession and its professionals, an absolutely beautiful representation of the vast changes in society forming the history of the RAANC.

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Crumps and Camouflets: Australian tunnelling companies on the Western Front

Damien Finlayson
Publisher: Big Sky Publishing
ISBN: 9780980658255
RRP: $29.50

After reading Les Carlyon’s Gallipoli and The Great War, I could hardly believe that a stone had been left unturned – and then I was handed Crumps and Camouflets.

In something as large as the First World War, there are bound to be small groups of specialists who get overlooked later when the histories are written. Damien Finlayson’s book addresses this on behalf of the Australians who made up the Australian Tunnelling Companies deployed on the Western Front between 1916 and the cessation of hostilities. Their tasks included digging underground shelters for soldiers, stories and machinery; creating instant communications trenches during offensives; and tunnelling forward under No-Man’s Land to the German lines, where large – sometimes enormous – quantities of explosive were planted, later to be detonated much to the surprise and demise of the enemy - the original ‘land mines’.

They also attempted to monitor and counter the German attempts to do the same thing to the Allied lines. Whilst doing this, they had to deal with all the usual difficulties miners have to contend with: deadly gas (such as carbon monoxide) build-ups in the tunnels, bad ground and tunnel collapses, as well as everything else the War brought in abundance – the shooting, shelling, and unsanitary insanity suffered by all.

Finlayson’s book has an ample sprinkling of diary material from members of the Companies, saving the book from being a dry historical tome, and is well-illustrated with many photos that I’m sure have not been seen in the numerous, more general, histories of WWI. ‘I’m personally delighted to add this book to my library.'

Barry Miller
vk3bjm@bigpond.com

Helping Hand Books series
Sarah Ferguson, Duchess of York
Sterling, 2010
RRP: $11.99 each
Ashley learns about strangers ISBN: 9781402773938
Emily’s first day at school ISBN: 9781402773921
Matthew and the bullies ISBN: 9781402773914
Michael and his new baby brother ISBN: 9781402773907
Madonna has done it, Kevin Rudd has done it, even Barack Obama has done it and now Sarah Ferguson Duchess of York, has done it again.

Ferguson has written a number of books, this time a series of Helping Hand Books for children. The four books are illustrated by Ian Cunliffe and are for children with reading ages of 4-7 years. They are simple stories of common challenges for children and about issues that concern parents. The books cover topics of children learning to deal with a new baby in the family, the first day of school, strangers and bullying. Designed to be read by parent and child together, the intent is to create an environment in which the child is comfortable discussing the problem.

Each of the issues is dealt with in a positive, albeit simplistic, way. If only family life with children was this easy! The real value of these books lies in the tips for parents written by a child psychologist, Dr Richard Woolfson, located at the end of each story.

Will the kids care who wrote the stories? Probably not. These books will be successful with children if they can relate to them and enjoy them. They are instructive and there is always a happy ending.

Diane Hollingsworth
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Memoirs of a Showgirl: From Brisvegas to the Champs Elysee
Shay Stafford
Hachette Australia, 2010
ISBN 9780733624872
RRP: $35.00

An intense publicity campaign has surrounded the recent release of Shay Stafford’s autobiography Memoirs of a Showgirl. Whilst the book mostly recounts her life in France as a dancer at the famous Moulin Rouge and Lido cabarets, it also charts her professional journey, beginning with childhood ballet lessons in Queensland, progressing to jobs in Gold Coast casinos, then to contracts in Japan and Malaysia before she reaches the top of her field (and long-held dream) in Paris.

Shay described her decade-long relationship with her adopted city and its inhabitants as “seven parts fascination and three parts frustration”. Her approach is honest and the story includes her culture shock (job nudity), tumultuous relationships and backstage dramas, yet it never strays into self-pity. A glamorous nightlife is contrasted with personal difficulties and the efforts of performing shows twelve times a week.

Shay (assisted by her husband, journalist Bryce Corbett) writes with charm and humour; she keenly depicts the characters and a melting pot of nationalities. However, there are some production flaws: sharper editing would have removed typos, clichés and repeated phrases. The book’s structure - five acts totalling 53 chapters - would have benefited from a table of contents. I was also disappointed that there were not more photographs, especially of her colleagues.

The book ends with her return to Australia, now as a wife and mother of two. Though ‘showgirl mums’ exist in the industry, she is ready to pursue a different direction. I enjoyed Memoirs of a Showgirl far more than I expected, and I strongly recommend it.

Leith Robinson
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Traversing the information landscape with Fulbright scholarship

Fulbright scholarships offer Australian researchers, educators and professionals amazing opportunities for educational and cultural exchange and professional learning in the United States. Scholarships of various types are available, including postgraduate, postdoctoral, senior and professional scholarships. The Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence (SIR) Program assists US educational institutions that are traditionally underrepresented in international academic exchange.

I have had amazing experiences as Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence, based in Denver Colorado from August to December 2010. My program was sponsored by Dr Mary Somerville, Director of Auraria Library, University of Colorado Denver. It has focused on advancing the academic success of students on the culturally diverse Auraria Campus, which incorporates the University of Colorado Denver, Metropolitan College Denver and Community College Denver. To this end I have worked with librarians, academics, learning advisers, and students to develop informed learning approaches to teaching and library administration. This has involved participation in library planning meetings, presenting workshops and leading informal discussions with librarians and educators and conducting focus groups with international students and teachers of international students.

A highlight of my Denver residency has been co-teaching a first year experience entitled Learning in the 21st Century with Dr Carole Basile. This has proved an innovative opportunity to weave CS Bruce’s ‘informed learning’ concepts into the course curriculum. Each week the students have been learning about learning as a discipline, whilst developing strategic, critical, ethical and creative approaches to using information to learn. In addition to basic learning theory, students have developed awareness of essential information sources and support services around the campus, to assist their transition to life and study at university.

Carole and I also collaborated with Liaison Librarian, Karen Sobel, and student peer mentor An Nyguen for students to explore informed learning in differing contexts such as museums, a science and technology expo and a nursing education simulation lab. As informed learning involves reflective information use, the students have created informed learning maps to document and reflect on their informed learning journeys, as well as informed learning treasure chests’ to gather their information resources.

The scholarship has also enabled me to visit other colleagues and campuses around the United States. I’ve had the pleasure of discussing the theory and practice of informed learning and the information using experiences and needs of international students with MLIS students at the University of Urbana Champaign, and faculty and librarians at Purdue University, Colgate University and University of Washington.

At Purdue University, I also attended the Project Information Literacy symposium, at which Dr Alison Head presented findings of an important investigation about college students’ information-seeking strategies and research difficulties. The report entitled Truth To Be Told: How College Students Evaluate And Use Information In The Digital Age was launched online on 1 November (Head and Eisenberg, 2010). This study, which involved 8353 college students on 25 US campuses addressed the vital question of what it is like to be a student in the digital age and explored students’ experiences of researching a topic from start to finish. The findings show that college (university) students “traverse the information landscape with a small compass” in other words, they tend to use a small range of familiar resources which they have previously used. They use classic standards for evaluating information resources, such as authority and currency. They find using information resources relatively easy, compared with initiating research and evaluating resources and their own work. Research is a social experience for students, who tend to discuss their information use with their peers and seek assistance, notably more from professors than from librarians. These findings provide a needed and sound evidence base for ongoing information literacy development in higher education.

Back in Colorado, I attended CALCON10, the Colorado Association of Libraries conference, where I was pleased to make contact with academic and teacher-librarians from around Colorado. The conference title, Illumination & Transformation, made an electrifyingly apt theme for a librarians’ conference with a focus on advocacy and literacy.

ALA President Roberta Stevens presented an insightful keynote address about the impacts of social and technological change on the roles of libraries and information professionals, stating libraries are the “heart and mind of the community” and “lifelines” and “first responders” in times of natural and economic distress, such as Hurricane Katrina, where libraries are able to deliver essential information and e-government services. She emphasized that librarians have unique opportunity to be 21st century leaders in the global economy as long as we respond to changing expectations and needs of information users. In line with this, she spoke about “blended librarians” – meaning the need for librarians with knowledge and expertise in both traditional formats and online tools who support users as online communicators and creators, who can envision library services for the future, and have skills to develop and implement new service models according to changing contexts.

This Fulbright residency has proved an intense and valuable learning experience for me, professionally and personally. I have made some wonderful friends among US librarians, faculty and other Fulbright scholars and alumni, with whom I look forward to further developing education and research connections and I thank sincerely all those in the US who so warmly welcomed and assisted me, along with the Australian-American Fulbright Commission and QUT for their support of my scholarship.


Hilary Hughes
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The ALIA Board of Directors is calling for Expressions of Interest from ALIA members for a new Advisory Committee being formed to assist the Board with the development of ALIA’s strategic direction for national LIS career promotion and recruitment. This Advisory Committee will have six to eight members and it is anticipated that the first meeting will be convened in early 2011 via teleconference.

The formation of this Advisory Committee aligns with ALIA’s 2010-2015 Strategic Plan, Outcome 3: Enhancing recruitment to the profession and promoting the value of varying library and information career pathways.

About ALIA’s Advisory Committees

The primary role of ALIA Advisory Committees is to provide advice in the form of identification of issues, opportunities, activities and in general assist in developing a strategic direction with the ALIA Board of Directors. Advisory Committees are formed and dissolved, and members are appointed, under ALIA By-Law 8. Members of Advisory Committees must be ALIA personal financial members of the nominated institutional representative. They are experts in the area of interest. Work done by Advisory Committee members is purely voluntary. At the time of nomination, members should carefully consider whether they have sufficient time available to take on committee responsibilities, and have sought the approval of their employer (if required) to be an appointed member to an ALIA Advisory Committee. Members hold office for an initial three years, with the Board being able to appoint the member for a further three year term. Advisory Committee guidelines are available here http://www.alia.org.au/governance/committees.

Interested members are asked to submit a 100 word CV outlining their suitability and interest in the committee to the Director: Professional Services. Nominations will go to the ALIA Board of Directors for approval.

Deadline for EOI: 21 December 2010
Enquiries: Janetta Mascilongo, ALIA Director: Professional Services
Email: janetta.mascilongo@alia.org.au
Phone: 02 62158235

Want to contribute to ALIA’s strategic direction for career promotion?

Do you know someone who is vision impaired, has a disability, or can speak, but not necessarily read English - their second language; With 17 RPH stations around the country, there is a Radio Reading Service near you - or them - that will keep them in touch with the printed news and allow them to still enjoy a good book. Go to www.rph.org.au to find out which station is nearest and start a new chapter in their life.
upcoming events

NATIONAL
Dec – Feb Summer Reading Club.
www.summerreadingclub.org.au

Feb 8 Safer Internet Day Great resources for libraries at www.cybersmart.gov.au/Libraries.aspx

1 Nov–10 Dec Syd Inst of TAFE and ALIA Training PD Course, Manage a Budget. Online, self-paced. Contact the ALIA PD Team, ph 02 6215 8222, pd@alia.org.au

NSW
7 Dec Rare Books and SciTech Library Tour / XMas Party join the ALIA Sydney group for fun evening touring the Rare Books and SciTech Libraries at the Sydney University Library. The tours are between 6pm and 7.30pm. Bookings are essential. Full rates: $2 ALIA members, $5 non-members [GST incl]. For more information, contact Vesna Cosic, ph 0438 179 605, vesnac@live.com.au

VIC
2 Dec Victorian ALIA Library Technicians at our End of Year Christmas Function Glenferrie Hotel, 324 Burwood Road, Hawthorn. Time: 6.30pm onwards. www.glenferriehotel.com.au For more information, contact Kim Wilson, kwilson@slv.vic.gov.au.

9-10 Dec ARK Forum and Workshops - Public Sector Digital Preservation Securing long-term access to digital assets. One-day forum, 10 Dec, Two pre-forum workshops, 9 Dec. Novotel Melbourne on Collins For more information, contact ARK Group, ph 13 0055, aga@arkgroupasia.com

CONFERENCES
1-3 Feb 2011 ALIA Information Online Conference and Exhibition Come network and join the thousands of delegates that attend this biennial event. Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre, www.information-online.com.au
Living Libraries name change

The internationally successful Living Library has changed its name and will now be known as Human Library. The Australian program will now be known as Human Libraries Australia.

The change has come about because of trademark issues in the United States, Canada and Mexico and the international body managing Living Library has agreed to the name change to avoid conflicts with other businesses in those countries.

Full details of the announcement are available at [http://humanlibrary.org/major-changes-coming-up-for-2010.html](http://humanlibrary.org/major-changes-coming-up-for-2010.html).

Human Library has asked all participating countries, now numbering over 45, to make the transition to the new name during 2010.

The Australian National Living Library Steering Committee has decided to change to the new name in order to preserve synergy with the international program, which is now seeking to trademark the Human Library name. The website, [http://www.humanlibraries.org.au](http://www.humanlibraries.org.au), is being updated accordingly.

The Steering Committee is now requesting all participating libraries to also make the change and to ensure events are named and promoted using the new name by the end of this year. Existing DVD stocks can continue to be used with the addition of a label announcing the new name. We have also confirmed that we can continue to use the term ‘living book’. The Committee understands that some resources, such as roll-up banners, may be more difficult to replace.

A teleconference for Human Library Organisers is planned and further details will be conveyed via the Human Libraries e-list.

Sadily, we must also report that the Department of Immigration and Citizenship, who have supported the program for the past three years, have advised that further funding is not available. ALIA and the Steering Committee are seeking new funding and will advise as more information becomes available.

Sue Hutley
Executive Director, ALIA
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Wanted: More intelligent Australians!

Having been an international student in Europe for two years undertaking a Masters degree in Digital Library Learning ([http://dill.hio.no/](http://dill.hio.no/)), one of my most treasured anecdotes involved a non-LIS European student. After having some very interesting conversations about our countries, world affairs and other interesting topics, this person suddenly looked at me with a puzzled look on his face. Before I could ask what it was about, he offered the following little gem: “You’re intelligent for an Australian, aren’t you?”

I had no idea what to say or how to react. I think I just said something like, “well, I try to be aware of what is happening outside my country” – or something equally as uninspiring!

I do not believe there was any intention to insult me or my country, but unfortunately his prior experience of Australians (he had visited our country) was of people who did not even know what was happening in the next state, let alone what was happening on the other side of the world. Yes, we are geographically isolated, and as much as we would like to turn the globe upside down and convince the rest of the world that they are the ones who are far away from us, I don’t think we will succeed. But that isolation should not affect our involvement on the international stage. Admittedly, the distance we must travel to many international events means our costs are often higher than our European and North American colleagues, but the rewards, I believe, are worth it.

Conferences are a wonderful way of not only hearing about LIS projects and developments, but of making new contacts. When the conference is international, the perspective gained can be even wider. My most recent international experience was to attend IFLA in Gothenburg in August. I was fortunate enough to also attend two pre-conferences: With the Right to Read in Oslo, Norway ([http://www.abm-utvikling.no/bibliotek/ifla-pre-conference-programme.html](http://www.abm-utvikling.no/bibliotek/ifla-pre-conference-programme.html)) and The Global Librarian ([http://www.ifla.org/en/events/the-global-librarian](http://www.ifla.org/en/events/the-global-librarian)) in Borås, Sweden.

The relatively small number of LIS professionals in any country who serve people with print disabilities makes events like With the Right to Read a truly valuable learning and networking experience. It enabled me to hear about incredible initiatives from around the globe which I perhaps would not have heard about otherwise, it allowed me to connect with people who have vast knowledge and experience in this area (always useful to have good contacts), and I have learnt a great deal more about the important work that is being done on a world-wide scale to have information produced in alternative, accessible formats.

Not only is an international conference a rewarding learning experience for us (as isolated Australians) we can make it a learning experience for the rest of the world too. If we were to really put ourselves out there and present papers about the wonderful work taking place Down Under, as ten or so of us did in Sweden this year, we can show the world that there are indeed many intelligent Australians.

Katherine Howard
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Office of Australian Information Commissioner launched

The Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) was officially launched in November by the Honourable Brendan O’Connor MP, Minister for Privacy and Freedom of Information (FOI).

The new office has been created to bring together three functions:

- Freedom of information functions, in particular the oversight of operation of the Freedom of Information Act 1982 and review of decisions made by agencies and ministers under that Act.
- Privacy functions, conferred by the Privacy Act 1988.
- Government information policy functions, conferred on the Commissioner under the Australian Information Commissioner Act 2010.

The Office’s website [http://www.oaic.gov.au](http://www.oaic.gov.au) includes information on all of these plus a series of fact sheets. On the day it was launched, the OAIC also released their first issues paper on Australian Government Information Policy and invited written comment on ten draft principles on open public sector information, with a deadline of March 1, 2011. For more information: [http://www.oaic.gov.au/publications/papers.html](http://www.oaic.gov.au/publications/papers.html)

Roxanne Missingham
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ALIA Information Science (SA) held a sell-out event recently to showcase some of the standout new technologies of interest to library staff. Three guest speakers provided a most entertaining and informative afternoon and the hands-on session allowed attendees to experience iPads and other e-readers. The take-away message of the day was to have a go, try things out – play and learn!

Kerrie Smith, from Education Services Australia, spoke about e-books from a schools perspective and her own experience. Gone are the days of having to go to school or travel with a heavy pile of books. Portability has arrived in the form of e-readers and MP3 players to carry all the books and audio-books we need - and these technologies are affordable, which is the key to the current revolution. iPads are replacing textbooks in Australian schools and universities. Kindles are being supplied to children in the third world; the opportunities appear almost limitless. But behind the scenes the device war (screen size, colour or black and white, backlit or not) and the format war (pdf or proprietary format) are continuing and there are still issues for libraries (loan the device or just the content?) and publishers (pricing and contracts) to resolve.

Kerrie also spoke about Second Life – virtual worlds, online meetings, and the benefits of living vicariously through your avatar. This appealing, interesting, and safe environment with a gaming atmosphere allows users to experience what they cannot in real life, through role-playing online. Second Life is becoming an indispensable learning tool in Australian universities and provides a ‘no negative consequences’ environment in conjunction with other real life learning experiences. The issues for libraries however, include the length of patrons’ computer use, the need for large and frequent software upgrades, the use of lots of bandwidth, and how to responsibly manage it so under 15 year olds can’t access it when they login from home.

Kate Sinclair, from Flinders University, spoke about the emerging technology aspects of the ALIA Access 2010 conference where delegates used a range of technologies to enhance their conference experience – Twitter (tweets worked well in the conference setting), Flickr (a nice way of bringing together a joint experience), blogs, Geotagging, and more. Kate highlighted some particularly interesting papers from the conference which are available on the conference web site at http://conferences.alia.org.au/access2010/program.html.

Katie Hannan, from City of Onkaparinga Libraries, spoke about the range of technologies she uses to develop and manage her online life and brand: her own web site, Twitter, Flickr, LinkedIn, delicious, SlideShare, Facebook, TripIt, Google Calendar, and more. The future of social media is up to all of us so we need to experiment, play, get on board, and not worry if our favourite apps don’t last forever. The only cautions are to be aware of your digital footprint and be mindful of privacy issues.

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Offering fantastic opportunities to promote your organisation and increase your exposure to new librarians, the New Librarians Symposium is the perfect platform to reconnect with your target market. You can select from a number of packages or call us to arrange a tailored package to suit your needs. Hurry - packages will not last long.

To find out more about the discounted rates for ALIA Conferences contact the Symposium Secretariat on 02 9368 1200 or email the ALIA Sponsorship and Exhibition Manager aliasponsorship@iceaustralia.com

Call for Abstracts deadline December 15 2010. Submit your abstract relating to one of the following themes:

- “Me, me, me!” (Professional metamorphosis)
- “Ask not what your library can do for you...” (Industry metamorphosis)

To submit an abstract online visit the Symposium website http://conferences.alia.org.au/nls5/

Key dates
- Draft program available early 2011.
- Registrations open February.


ALIA Information Online Conference and Exhibition 2011

The Silly Season is fast approaching. The conference tree is being trimmed, the menu has been set, the keynotes have been invited and the pudding is being filled with papers. The only thing missing is you! The Conference Committee has you on its wish list to make the 15th conference the best one ever.

The program for Information Online 2011 includes over 65 presentations, from international and local keynote speakers, and local practitioners and vendor presentations that will challenge and inspire you. Check out Online Bytes on our website for a taster of the program.

The largest of its kind in Asia Pacific, the exhibition features products and services from industry suppliers showcasing a diverse range of products and services. A full list of all our much appreciated sponsors and exhibitors is available on our website and we also follow them on Twitter and Facebook.

Don’t miss out on this premier networking and professional development event at the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre, Darling Harbour, Sydney from Tuesday 1 - Thursday 3 February.

Want to get more from your Information Online 2011 experience?


Our Social Program always draws a large crowd and it is guaranteed to be a great way to unwind, network and de-brief at the end of each day.

The Conference Committee wishes you good health and we look forward to seeing you and everything that is Information Online at Darling Harbour in 2011.

Keep up to date with all things IO:
- Our blog at http://www.information-online.com.au
- http://www.twitter.com/iogau, hashtag #aliaic
- http://www.linkedin.com/groups?home=&gid=1697997
- http://www.delicious.com/iogau

ALIA National Library & Information Technicians (Libtech) 2011

Conference: Back to Basics

Sheraton Hotel, Perth Monday 12 - Friday 16 September 2011

The ALIA National Library & Information Technicians 2011 Conference is delighted to announce the participation of the following acclaimed speakers:

- Sarah Garnett
- Alison Sutherland
- Rachel Green
- Andy Wright
- Stephen McVey
- Dr Lisa Cluett

Speaker Profile

Name: Sarah Garnett
Organisation: The Benjamin Andrew Footpath Library

Sarah Garnett is a corporate communications producer, married mother of two and also the Founder of The Benjamin Andrew Footpath Library. She has a story to tell that is truly unique.

One night in 2003, Sarah noticed a homeless man sitting in the gutter reading a novel under a streetlight. She started a conversation with him and it was there The Footpath Library was born. The Benjamin Andrew Footpath Library gives away around 2000 free books a month to homeless and disadvantaged people in Sydney and Melbourne. It is a library that is noisy, outdoors, requires no membership, you can take as many books as you like and they don’t have to be returned. There is no other library like it anywhere in the world.

Sarah’s story is about taking a risk on an opportunity that comes from left of field, changing your life on a hunch and how one person can make a difference. The Footpath Library characters’ Sarah introduces in her presentation leave her audiences stunned, incredulous and moved to tears.

Sarah is dedicated to promoting literacy and changing the attitudes we have towards homeless and disadvantaged people. She is an emotive, inspirational speaker who appeals to all ages and all walks of life. Visit the Conference website for further keynote speaker announcements and profiles.

Sponsorship and exhibition opportunities

Sponsorship and Exhibition opportunities are filling up quickly, don’t delay or you will miss out! A range of fantastic packages have been developed to promote your organisation at the Conference. ALIA are offering special rates for organisations wishing to sponsor more than one ALIA Conference.

To receive a copy of the Sponsorship & Exhibition Prospectus, along with a list of remaining options, email us now at libtech2011@iceaustralia.com

Staying in Touch with Libtech 2011


Find us at ‘ALIA National Library & Information Technicians 2011 Conference’
- http://twitter.com/ALIALibtech, hashtag #ALIALibtech
- Contact us directly via email: libtech2011@iceaustralia.com

Discounted rates are available for those who are interested in sponsoring at more than one ALIA Conference.

www.alia.org.au
Study Grant to research conference mentoring

Naomi Doessel is the recipient of the 2010 ALIA Study Grant. She will be undertaking research to explore ways of assisting new professionals to get the most out of ALIA conferences and piloting a new conference mentoring program at the 2011 ALIA Information Online Conference.

Initially an impetus of the New Generation Advisory Committee (NGAC), the idea for 'conference mentoring' in this context is based on the American Library Association’s New Member’s Round Table’s (ALA NMRT) Conference Mentoring program. From the NMRT Mentoring Program website, conference mentoring is defined as:

a program designed to help first time attendees ... feel at ease at a conference (whose size can often be overwhelming and intimidating!) by pairing them with seasoned conference attendees.

While ALIA conferences are not as large as the ALA annual event, they can still be overwhelming for new professionals who may have little or no experience attending large plenary conferences, or who may only be familiar with smaller, specialised conferences. Elements such as the large trade show at ALIA Information Online, additional meetings and social gatherings, as well as the sheer size of a conference with around 1500 attendees can be overpowering. The mentoring scheme will provide support to new professionals at the conference, and assist them to get the most out of their conference attendance.

The mentoring program will pair a new professional ‘mentee’ conference attendee with a seasoned professional conference attendee ‘mentor’. Each couple will be paired according to their registration materials prior to the conference and the mentoring relationship will be for a short period prior to the conference (for email contact), and then for the conference duration. There will be no requirement for pairs to continue their relationship beyond the conference, however if both participants are agreeable it will not be discouraged.

The trial is for a maximum of 200 participants: 100 mentees and 100 mentors. These numbers have been determined in order to gauge interest in the program through discussions with ALIA Co-convenor Kay Harris on the numbers of first-timers regularly attending the conference, to ensure an adequate evaluation of the trial, and that the trial is of a manageable size for the volunteers running it.

Mentee participants do not have to be early career/new graduate professionals or students; however the main idea of the program is to provide benefit to new graduate professionals. Mentees will preferably not have attended large plenary conferences previously, and not attended ALIA Information Online. Mentor participants will have attended an ALIA Information Online before and be familiar with the conference, trade, venue and additional events.

This pilot program will assist new professionals to maximise the benefits of their attendance at ALIA Information Online 2011. It will also facilitate the evaluation of the model and act as a proof of concept for an ongoing conference mentoring scheme.

For information on how to register for the conference mentoring program as a mentor or mentee please check http://www.information-online.com.au/ or email naomidoessel@gmail.com.

Naomi Doessel

Partnering with the Profession

Zenith is a specialist agency offering Employment Consulting and Library Technical Services to the Library, Records, Archives and Information Management industries. Zenith serves clients across all sectors from public libraries and government departments to education, large corporate and not-for-profit organisations. With offices in Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra, and as a member of Careers MultiList, with over 90 affiliate partners around Australia, Zenith can offer a wider range of employment and technical services than other agencies within the Information Management sector.

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A Deakin University Library forum to celebrate international Open Access Week 2010 provided an opportunity to explore the hotly debated issues surrounding improved access to research. The forum tackled the challenging question - how do we make research freely, immediately and permanently available online to anyone via Open Access?

University Librarian at Deakin, Ms Anne Horn said Open Access literature is digital, online, free of charge, free of most copyright licensing restrictions and compatible with peer review.

“What makes Open Access possible is the technology of the internet and the consent of the author or copyright holder,” Ms Horn said.

“The question is not whether scholarly literature can be made costless, but whether the costs can be met through business models that don’t create barriers to access,” she said.

The forum, held on Thursday, 21 October 2010 drew attendees from 10 Universities and Institutes. It featured keynote speaker Professor John Houghton, Professorial Fellow, Victoria University, who has examined the economic implications of various scholarly publishing models, including Open Access.

“Studies in Australia, the UK, Netherlands, Denmark, Germany and the US suggest that not only are Open Access publishing models lower cost than the subscription or toll access model, but they also have wider cost implications through access and authentication system and library handling cost savings,” Professor Houghton said.

“They have even wider economic and social benefits, as open access to the findings of research enables us to realise higher returns on public investment in research by making it more widely and freely available and maximising its impact. “National, sectoral, funder or institutional Open Access policies and self-archiving mandates can improve access to research and improve efficiency at relatively little cost and with no immediate disruption to scholarly publishing practices and traditions,” he said.

Professor Houghton, whose presentation reviewed the major issues concerning academic publishing via Open Access and the lessons learned from the US and Europe concluded that the benefits of more open access exceeded the costs. The benefits accrue in the form of cost savings and, more importantly, by increasing the efficiency of research and making it more accessible, Open Access increases the return on investment in R&D.

Professor Houghton said the benefits were likely to be positive for both open access publishing (Gold OA) and for parallel-subscription publishing and self-archiving (Green OA).

“At the institutional level, research has shown that the benefits would be likely to outweigh the costs for all but the most research-intensive of universities,” he said.

“Self-archiving alternatives appear to be the more cost-effective, given the capacity to enhance access at very little cost, although whether self-archiving in parallel with subscriptions is a sustainable model over the longer term is debatable.”

Professor Houghton added Open Access self-archiving mandates have been adopted widely overseas, including the National Institutes of Health, Harvard University, Stanford University and MIT, however, few mandates have been instituted to date in Australia. The forum gave researchers, academics, publishers and librarians the opportunity to learn more about Open Access and to debate Open Access issues in Australia. Other speakers at the forum were Mr John Lamp, Senior Lecturer, Deakin University, speaking on ‘Where is Open Access in the ARC’s ERA?’ and Springer’s Mr James Mercer speaking on ‘Open Access: An Academic Publisher’s Perspective’.

All presentations plus an audio recording of the proceedings are available through Deakin Research Online: http://www.deakin.edu.au/dro/view/DU:30030956

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Deakin University Library celebrates Open Access Week 2010

Open Access Forum (L-R): James Mercer - Licensing Manager Oceania, Springer; Professor John Houghton - Professorial Fellow, Victoria University’s Centre for Strategic Economic Studies (CSES) and Director of the Centre’s Information Technologies and the Information Economy Program; Sue Owen - Associate Librarian, Client Services, Deakin University; John Lamp - Senior Lecturer, School of Information Systems, Deakin University; Anne Horn - University Librarian, Deakin University
A graduate librarian’s big adventure

On Tuesday, 31st August this year I set off to attend my first ALIA conference, Access 2010. Flying from Sydney to Brisbane with a mix of trepidation and excitement, I landed at Brisbane airport and took a late afternoon shuttle bus to my hotel. Armed with my map, I stepped out to take a refreshing evening walk to the Brisbane Convention Centre (just to be sure I knew where I was going on the first day of the conference).

On the first day I attended Library Tour 2, a walking tour through lovely Brisbane city. It included site visits of the Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane City Council Library, the State Library of Queensland and Southbank Institute of Technology Library (with welcome refreshments and lunch at various stops). The tour guides at each library were friendly and generously shared information about their library’s philosophy, design, facilities and services. It was a valuable day and a great precursor to the rest of the conference.

On the first day of presentations, I attended the conference stream targeted at new graduates, What Next! Practical Information To Enhance The Career Of New Graduates. Over the course of this day, I was able to listen to stories of the diverse experiences and journeys of many library professionals. Whilst there is no right or wrong career path for a library professional, I did discover that there are a number of steps you can take to help your career develop and take shape.

The first presentation of the day was from Kate Davis, Queensland University of Technology, who outlined more than 20 tips to assist new graduates kick-start their career. Tips included assessing what works for you and what are your priorities (both personally and professionally), having a ‘willing attitude’, being open-minded, networking (especially in terms of developing a personal learning network) and getting an online presence, just to mention a few. The complete presentation is available at http://virtuallyalibrarian.com/2010/09/05/career-pimping-library-style/. I also recommend reading Karen Bath’s presentation which highlights some of the challenges new graduates face in seeking employment and provides a checklist for professional involvement.

Brenna Cook and Rebecca Whitehead gave a joint presentation describing their experiences as new trainee librarians at the University of Adelaide. Their experience highlighted the benefit of a mentoring program that teamed them with experienced and influential baby boomer library professionals. They described a rich, challenging and rewarding library journey. The trainee program has developed their abilities in many areas including public speaking and research skills and it has fostered their self-confidence which, in turn, has enabled them to try non-traditional approaches to projects.

For those interested in studying or working abroad, the presentations by Katherine Howard and Donna Priddle provided an in-depth review of their experiences and the process to achieve these goals. Hoi Ying Ng’s paper discussed the development of a research proposal that evolved into a working project to develop a pilot library blog. Hoi identified the JISC i-skills cycle as instrumental in guiding the project planning process. What became quickly evident was the valuable learning experience Hoi gained.

The workshop, Idea To Abstract: How To Write For Conferences And Journals, explored creative methods to generate topic ideas, developing and refining an idea and conducting literature reviews. The importance of being an evidence-based practitioner was expressed and tips were provided on how to write clear, coherent and concise abstracts.

Michaela Olde’s presentation, Making The Leap: Opportunities Outside The Library Walls, encouraged graduates to be open-minded about moving across industries or venturing into non-traditional library and information sector roles. Adding this scope to job-hunting helped broaden my view on how to search for roles where my library studies and previous work experience might be relevant. Through listening to Fiona Blackburn, The Older Experienced Worker: Perfect For The Industry, I learnt that it is important to value all the skills you bring from previous work experience. They can add insight, dimension and a valued skill set.

The day ended with a presentation from Emerald Leung, This Is Your Library Life, an informative and fun insight into her work-life journey to date. What made this presentation memorable was her interwoven story of life and work with an entertaining interview presentation style with Naomi Doessel. The new grads stream was a conference day filled with practical career advice and plenty of inspiration from a dynamic group of committed professionals.

On the second day of presentations, I had the opportunity to listen to speakers from public and special library sectors. During this day, as presenters outlined their achievements in particular projects or discussed major challenges they presently face, I was struck by how much can be learnt from shared experiences. Libraries are ideal places for cross-pollination of ideas from people who have worked in different industries, different library sectors and of different age groups who can share unique experiences, approaches and solutions. I observed the commitment and passion that library and information professionals bring to their work, whether it be promoting literacy, providing life-long learning opportunities or seeking the best solutions for serving clients’ information needs.

Overall, the conference was positive, rewarding and enlightening. I would advise other new grads to say ‘yes’ to opportunities as they arise and to seek out such opportunities. The conference has helped me identify areas of interest that I would like to explore further and I have gained an understanding of my role in the library community and the importance of sharing knowledge and experience with one another. I recommend to new grads and LIS students who were unable to attend the conference to spend time reviewing the papers mentioned in this article (many are accessible via ALIA Access 2010: http://conferences.alia.org.au/access2010/program.html). On a final note, the flight to Brisbane was relatively short but over the course of the next three days at the conference, I came away with an appreciation of the vastness of Australia and the significant work being conducted on a daily basis by information professionals all over Australia.

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Nancy Sylaprany graduated with a Post Graduate Diploma in Library and Information Studies from Charles Sturt University in 2009. She currently works at Cederon College, Merrylands, a secondary girls’ school in Sydney.

Farewell Naomi, welcome Lesa

With this EEI column we farewell the indefatigable Naomi Doessel from the position of EEI Co-ordinator, a task she has taken truly to heart and given her passion for more than three years. Thank you Naomi. And we welcome to the position Lesa Maclean to the role from the Jan/Feb 2011 issue. So, all you new grads out there, watch for Lesa’s requests for contributions, coming soon! Lesa can be contacted on maclean.lesa@gmail.com.
From early flirtation to a long-standing commitment – an IFLA story

I never thought that when I attended my first IFLA conference in Copenhagen in 1997 as ALIA President that I would get hooked for a substantial part of my academic life. It was the first time an ALIA President had attended the conference and as far as I know the practice of the President and Executive Director attending each IFLA conference has continued since then.

Copenhagen was a wonderful place to have a first IFLA conference experience. A small and very manageable city, a country with a deep commitment to libraries, wonderful hosts, and many firsts for me, including my first meeting with the amiable raconteur Norman Horrocks from Nova Scotia, who was with Scarecrow Press at the time, and who passed away recently. He’d spent time in Western Australia at our State Library and when he found out that I was a West Aussie we remained friends. My first meeting with many international names that I knew from the literature and was able to speak to first hand, my first international experience at networking – so valuable in my life as an academic. And my first overseas trip away on my own, without family.

IFLA can be mindblowing complicated, especially for the newcomer. But I am not one to shadow folks nor be mentored away on my own, without family.

During my time in office, I worked with LTR colleagues on the promotion of research to our international LIS community (including through my work with ALIA on its Research Committee), and I worked on joint research projects. As an example of the latter, I was the Australian coordinator for the IFLA international research project on Political perceptions of the public library and also for the IFLA international research project on An investigation of the role of IFLA in promoting change and diffusing professional norms in libraries with a weight on norms, standards and policies relating to lifelong literacy, lead by Ragnar Audunson.

One can remain on a Standing Committee for two four year terms, which I did with LTR. After that I made the decision to continue my IFLA involvement, but this time as a member of the Education & Training Standing Committee. That four year term is up in 2011, and guess what? I hope to be re-elected to this Committee for another, and my final, four year term with this Standing Committee.

So why the fascination with IFLA when I get little if any financial assistance to attend (though the expenses are tax deductible)? My attendance is work-related so my absence is deductible)? My attendance is work-related so my absence is deductible? But most importantly, what I learn I share with my students. And the only way you can do this with enthusiasm and honesty is to be there and be involved.


The Benjamin Andrew Footpath Library

Sarah Garnett has been awarded the ALIA Letter of Recognition for her initiative, The Benjamin Andrew Footpath Library. The ALIA Letter of Recognition is awarded to a person or organisation rendering a significant, special or specific service to: librarianship, libraries or information management; promotion and development of libraries or library services; or demonstration such a service over a period of time.

The Benjamin Andrew Footpath Library was started in 2003 in Sydney following the death of Sarah’s friend Benjamin Andrew. The ‘library’ opens once a week in Sydney’s CBD, laying out donated books on the footpath for homeless people to borrow. There are no shelves, no classification systems, no return dates – in fact books are not required to be returned at all.

Around 2000 books, selected based on the wish lists of local hostels, are given away each month through this initiative. The Benjamin Andrew Footpath Library helps some of Australia’s most marginalised and disadvantaged community members remain connected and engaged in the society and democracy around them and ALIA congratulates Sarah and The Benjamin Andrew Footpath Library on their achievements.

Sarah will be a keynote speaker at the ALIA Library Technicians Back to Basics conference in Perth next year and will share the story of Benjamin and the library he inspired in her presentation. Visit http://conferences.alia.org.au/libtec2011/ for more information.

Sue Hutley
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A gamble or a sure thing?
There's a little story unfolding in the US, and it's going to have lots of bloggers watching very carefully from the sidelines - or at least they hope they'll only be on the sidelines. There's a good summary of the situation at Groklaw (http://www.groklaw.net/article.php?story=20100922113406655) but in essence it involves an aggressive US law firm (yes, Virginia, there is such a beast) that's been pursuing bloggers who've lifted copy from a Las Vegas newspaper and republished it. The lawyers' strategy appears to take a shotgun approach (they currently have 132 cases listed) by serving papers on bloggers located in other states and relying on their preference to settle out of court. It seems though that through an administrative error, one of the bloggers has been able to call their bluff and a Federal judge is starting to pay some serious attention to the issue, including a reference to an article that begins by saying that, "existing copyright law is not well-suited to handle the transmission of copyrighted works over the Internet." Now, alert readers will have seen that I have mixed feelings about copyright on Internet content, but some certainty as a result of judicial rulings will be a good thing, won't it?

Coming soon to a store near you … or at least I hope so. Siftables (http://sifteo.com/) appeared at a Ted talk last year, and I'm delighted to see that a company is developing the product. They're tiny computers that look like little tiles that relate to each other and can be used in spelling or arithmetic or even in mixing colours. My grandchildren are going to love them, but of course I'll have to do some testing first, to make sure that they're safe for the tots.

It's the way you reply
Never underestimate the power of words ... and the capability of humans to put their own interpretation to them. Consider two responses:

"Message rejected because of over-capacity"
and
"Thanks for getting in touch with us. There's a system problem at the moment but we'll get back to you as soon as we can"

Which would you prefer to receive?
There's a not-so-subtle change going on in the online world of user relations. It's much easier now to send a message to someone (a restaurant where you had a good meal, the website of a musical group whose concert you've just attended, or perhaps a politician) and we're doing this in greater numbers than ever. Just imagine that you were trying to contact the restaurant to tell them how great their food is, and you're told that your message has been rejected. Some of the warm feeling dissolves.

Then consider a message to the politician telling him that you've admired his bearing in tough times. A polite auto-reply comes back saying that they can't answer each message personally, but thanking you for writing. And if that's followed up a couple of weeks later with a personal message responding exactly to what you wrote, well that's polite. It's also smart.

Laws old and new
I hadn't taken the time to see the new improved UK Legislation site (http://www.legislation.gov.uk/) until quite recently. It's very impressive. Anyone with an interest in history will be pleased to see the detail of Acts of the various parliaments going way, way back.

Who does own your brand?
I was at a presentation in October where the main topic was social media marketing, and various experts told us all about who owned our brand (hint: they say it's people who get a kick out of following other people online) and they made a pretty good case for being careful what we did in the social media world – which wasn't surprising, because the people sponsoring the function either provided consulting or monitoring services for social media. The ruckus about the new logo for Gap (see the whole story at http://mashable.com/2010/10/11/gap-logo/) hadn't quite broken at that time, otherwise I'm sure the boosterism would have reached new heights.

I was discussing this with a couple of workmates who aren't into Twitter and Facebook, but they couldn't see what the fuss was about. And this caused me to stop for a bit and process what had gone on. I don't know how many people had protested about how Gap management had handled the whole affair - I'd guess it was somewhere between 100 and 100,000 - but I suppose it's all about taking notice of squeaky wheels rather than the ones that are running smoothly. Most of us are more inclined to tell our friends about bad experiences than good ones, and I think that's what happened here. The bosses at Gap knew that for every complainant there were many customers who liked the new logo or even didn't give a hoot. But they backtracked.

But is that where we are now? So worried about adverse comment that we'll reverse good business decisions. I think the answer is yes - until the inevitable backlash.

Phones ain't just phones
I wrote a while ago about a blind person's experience with the iPad. Then along came another post at http://behindthecurtain.us/2010/06/12/my-first-week-with-the-iphone/ showing what's possible with the humble iPhone. I was particularly taken with the use of the camera to detect colours, and thereby allow some limited form of vision - even down to the humble pumpkin.

e-books – the facts at last
I've written a few posts about e-books and how I felt they weren't for me. Well, courtesy of a generous family I'm now the owner of a Kobo. They gave me a choice of which reader I wanted, and I reckoned that this was the one that best met my needs at this time. Ask me in a few months and the answer may be a different one. You can expect a proper report after I give it a good workout over the holiday period. But here are a couple of early observations: there are lots of e-books that you can only buy from inside the US, and a big supplier in the UK shows many of its e-book titles "out of stock". What?
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New collections-based research

As the recent recipient of the YBP/Lindsay & Croft Research Award, I am currently undertaking research focused on identifying the prevalence and distribution of single (last) copies in the collections of Australian research libraries, and recording the extent of overlap between collections.

The research will also produce data about the focus and scope of the national research collection in terms of subject coverage. With the benefit of this data, Australian research libraries will be in a better position to assess the value of collaboration with regard to a number of collection management functions, including collection development, storage of legacy print collections, disposal, last copy retention, and inter library loan/ document delivery.

Previous Australian overlap studies have been hampered by the limitations of the software available for use with the National Bibliographic Database (NBD). The holdings data in the NBD is now available from WorldCat, which is supported by OCLC's WorldCat Collection Analysis software dedicated to mining collections data. The availability of this software greatly improves the prospects for collections based research.

My research will therefore make use of the WorldCat Collection Analysis software to identify the existence of overlap and unique holdings in Australian research collections. It will also be possible to use a feature that allows for the creation of ‘predefined groups’ that allow for a richer examination of the holdings data than could be obtained by comparing single libraries. Groups could include (for example) libraries representing the Group of Eight, the Australian Technology Network (ATN), National and State Libraries of Australasia (NSLA), selected special libraries, or TAFE. The results from the study will therefore present a more sophisticated understanding of overlap and the distribution of single copies than has previously been possible. This data will allow the Australian research library community to plan accordingly for the long terms storage, discovery and delivery of legacy print materials.

The project is a continuation of research that has been undertaken in conjunction with CAVAL Ltd regarding the long-term management of Australian print collections. In the most recent phase of the research, a pilot study was conducted to test the methodology that will be employed and the results of this pilot study will be reported in a forthcoming issue of Australian Library Journal. As a collaboration between a university-based researcher and industry, the research also serves to foster the important links between research and practice. Too frequently research is believed to produce outputs that have little relevance to practice while practitioners are often perceived to develop services on a non-existent evidence base. This project is grounded in a collaboration of research and practice that will have benefits to both.

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The last word

Borderless librarianship

I have kept my now expired passport from my ‘IFLA years’, that decade during which I occupied leadership positions within the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions. It’s a nice memento of too many hours on planes to and from destinations on all the continents and regions (except Antarctica unfortunately). It reminds me of my surprise at being met ‘airside’ and escorted through Customs without a pause at Algiers airport and my exhaustion while taking over 40 hours to return from Tunis, host city of the World Summit on the Information Society in November 2005.

So, is international librarianship more than passport stamps recording visits to exotic places by senior librarians? Is the attraction of IFLA merely an annual indulgence for regular attendees who visit cultural sites, savour unusual foods and meet friends? It does offer these treats – such as the opportunity to visit fabled Carthage in the suburbs of Tunis – but it offers much more, something that we cannot get in our daily practice of our profession, a form of international professional citizenship.

That membership of an international professional community helps define our vocation as a profession. When we get together with colleagues from 130 or more countries as we do at IFLA’s congresses, we see our profession in action in myriad responses to the needs of people in many different situations. We hear of the efforts to provide services to those in prison and those who are isolated or transcending disabilities. We interrogate the challenges of preserving the cultural forms of the past and ‘catching the rainbow’ of new digital media. We contribute to the development of new standards and protocols to underpin our future services or the slowly growing international awareness of the needs of indigenous peoples. We are able to appreciate the destruction wrought by warfare as in Iraq and Sarajevo and by nature as in Aceh and Haiti – and see what we can do to help our colleagues in distress. This is truly an international professional citizenship through which we translate our professional concerns from local matters to the global level.

But there’s another aspect, perhaps more significant: we gain the opportunity to see our daily professional practice and concerns reflected in the mirror of global diversity. We look afresh at librarianship in Australia to see our strengths but also where we can learn from others. We get the chance to provide some leadership and to bolster areas of our own activity.

Australian librarians attended the first global meeting of librarians and continue to make huge contributions more than a century later. The repute in which Australian library practice is held internationally and the high standards we achieve at home are direct results of that international perspective.

ALIA’s membership of IFLA – through which all of ALIA’s personal and institutional members are also IFLA members – opens the door to that international perspective and to international professional citizenship. It’s our passport to the ‘world class’ librarianship practiced in Australia and informed by global insights, standards and discourse.

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