Dream on - it’s good for your library

Stepping up, stepping out: Australia’s libraries take the lead

Experience extraordinary in Perth 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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PTHR
2011
experience extraordinary
conferences this september
Survey question: What’s your favourite library service?

Answer: I can’t explain. It’s just too wonderful to describe! I am speechless!

- From an online survey conducted by Tutoring Australasia (Blacktown City Council Library, take a bowl!).
OUR BROAD CHURCH

ALIA is a member-based organisation which exists to serve and advance the interests of its members. To quote our immediate past President Graham Black, “ALIA is a broad church”.

As a profession we work in a wide variety of roles in a variety of organisations and this is reflected in our membership, interests and priorities. This is an amazing strength, but also presents challenges to the Association.

We have around 6000 members, yet many more people benefit from the work of ALIA and many of our services, including employment lists and ALIA events, are open and accessible to all within the profession. The extent of support for non-members is an active discussion within the Board as we want to ensure this doesn’t occur at the expense of the members who financially sustain ALIA.

Our Strategic Plan includes a significant growth target for our membership base and this is important to ensure a strong and sustainable profession in future years. Most of us place great value in a word of mouth recommendation from someone that we trust. So, I would encourage all members to provide that recommendation to our colleagues and advocate on behalf of ALIA.

If it helps, then I’ll share some of the reasons I given when I’m asked – why be an ALIA member?

There are of course many direct benefits, including quality professional development opportunities such as conferences and training, discussion and debate, professional journals and publications, the continuing professional development scheme, and copyright and other advice. ALIA also sets the standards for professional education and monitors these through accreditation services to ensure that the tertiary education undertaken to become a librarian or information professional meets those standards. Standards are vitally important to retaining our professional credibility.

ALIA advocates on behalf of and for the whole profession across a wide variety of issues, across all levels of government and with the private sector too. The list of recent submissions to government enquiries, participation in Committees and presentations at hearings is long and varied, ranging from social inclusion, disaster recovery, The Book Industry Strategy Group, cybersafety, school libraries and the national broadband network to name just a few. You can always find a full list of advocacy activities and submissions on the ALIA website. Recent, very visible, successes from ALIA’s lobbying efforts include securing substantial funding from the Federal Government for National Year of Reading and The Library Initiative.

For me personally, though, whilst I appreciate all of the personal benefits and actions on my behalf, membership is as much about the sense of profession that comes from being part of an active, vibrant and community of like-minded people and having a recognised professional body which represents my interests.

But, it’s not only about what ALIA can give to me, it’s about what I can give back to my profession and my professional colleagues to enhance our skills, abilities, knowledge, community standing, funding and credibility. I would also add that, importantly, ALIA gives me a voice on issues that I don’t necessarily have in my day job.

I wouldn’t leave home without my ALIA membership.

Margaret Allen
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YOUR INDUSTRY SNAPSHOT

ABR online
The Australian Book Review is now also available online with content-enhancement. Libraries that subscribe to ABR OE (as in Online Edition) can access back issues, search articles and enjoy reader discussions in realtime. Free trials are available on request. www.australianbookreview.com.au

Two new publications from IFLA
Subject Access: Preparing for the Future contains the proceedings of the August 2009 conference in Florence, covering theoretical and methodological aspects of rethinking semantic access to information and knowledge. Global Perspectives on School Libraries: Projects and Practices focuses on fostering the school librarian’s professional development for school library enhancement (also available as eBooks).

Tracking public library patrons
In the US, Library Journal and Bowker have joined forces to launch Patron Profiles, a quarterly survey of 1,500 individual library users from eight regions across the USA about their experiences and expectations regarding what LJ and Bowker call “the big questions and trends in libraries”, placed in the context of broader consumer behaviour. For the 2011-2012 survey that means a focus on digital and new reading technologies. The premier issue of Patron Profiles will be available online in October. www.patronprofiles.com. And in Australia? Anyone?

Save Our Libraries
Many members will have heard of the campaign launched to save funding for Victoria’s public libraries. ALIA is strongly supporting the public campaign being coordinated by the Municipal Association of Victoria, along with Public Libraries Australia and councils across the state. You can join the campaign via www.facebook.com/stoplibrarycuts and find more information about it at www.mav.asn.au/saveourtibraries.
HAPPY FEET

I am surprised that in this issue of INCITE there has not been mention of shoes - seeing it is the Stepping Up and Stepping Out edition and so many ALIA members love their footwear! With so many women in our profession (and speaking of statistics, we of course had the Census 2011 this month) I thought someone in their article would make the analogy or connection.

Stepping up, to contribute to leadership of our profession, is something I am pleased to do each day, whether it's a 4.30am interview with ABC Talkback Radio, attendance and networking with the IT crowd and MPs at Parliament House at the National Digital Inclusion Summit or helping finalise one of our most important reports (the 2011 Internet Access in Public Libraries Survey Report is on my desk as I write) or assisting our conference committees to complete their work for our important ALIA Conferences, coming up in just a few weeks.

Whatever it takes, I hope that all of our ALIA members do something each day to step up to the plate. The number of contributions received for this issue seems to indicate that's the case and in this issue you will read about library professional stepping up in exciting new ways in every type of library and at every level of the profession. In fact, we ran out of room to include them all, so you will see even more evidence of innovative and proactive approaches in coming issues of INCITE.

I’ve noticed too that many library types are also taking healthy steps, participating in events such as fun runs (check out www.gettheworldmoving.com/ to see what I mean). You never know who you are going to meet when you are out and about, or when there will be a chance to talk about libraries to people who can help spread the message. Queensland members will know our State Manager for Queensland, Claudia Davies recently took the opportunity of sharing a lift with our Prime Minister to share with her some key library facts. It’s ‘advocacy on the run’, and you never know what doors it may open, so give it a try.

As I write this, it’s time to get packing for Perth for our back-to-back ALIA Conferences starting in a week or two. Which means it is also time to say thanks to the wonderful conference committees who have put two years of heart and soul into these two conferences - ALIA Library and Information Technicians Conference and the ALIA New Librarians Symposium 5. It’s going to be like an ALIA Festival in the West this September.

Whatever you are doing, whether it feels like ‘just work’ or something startling and new, we all have opportunities to step up. And everyone in the profession, and all the communities we serve, will share in the benefits.

Sue Hutley
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APologies

The geographic gremlins have been busy. Our sincere apologies to Charles Darwin University, which we managed to relocate temporarily to Western Australia in our ALIA accredited educators feature in the July issue of INCITE. CDU is, of course, in the Northern Territory and not planning to move to Perth anytime soon.

Apologies too, to Leith Robinson and her PhD supervisors, who are at Curtin University, not Edith Cowan University and again our thanks to Leith for permission to use that material in our August issue. And Alyson Dalby has departed the ALIA State Manager’s role for New South Wales, while Claudia Davies is very much still the State Manager for Queensland (and now quite famous for bearding our Prime Minister in a lift to successfully deliver her famous speech!).

And finally, in the August issue we featured a photo of the soaring architecture of the La Trobe Reading Room at the State Library of Victoria which we managed to relocate temporarily to APOLOGIES. Our sincere apologies to Leith Robinson and her PhD supervisors, who are at Charles Darwin University, which we managed to relocate temporarily to Western Australia in our ALIA accredited educators feature in the July issue of INCITE. CDU is, of course, in the Northern Territory and not planning to move to Perth anytime soon.

Standing Committees consolidated

ALIA's Standing Committees are to be consolidated into three clearly focused Sub-Committees to better support the objectives of the ALIA Strategic Plan. The three sub-committees of the Board will be the Finance, Audit, Risk Management Sub-committee (now also responsible for Governance matters) – to be chaired by Vanessa Little, Professional Development, Education, Research and Publishing Sub-Committee – to be chaired by Graham Black and the Membership and Awards Sub-committee – to be chaired by John Bayliss.

IBSA review drawing to a close - but work is not over yet

The Innovation and Business Skills Australia (IBSA) review of the National Training Package is drawing to its final stages. ALIA would like to thank all who participated in the process and provided feedback – the new qualifications are a direct result of those contributions. Of course, the work is not nearly over. As soon as official endorsement comes through and the Training Package is available on training.gov.au, Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) will have a 12 month transition phase to develop course offerings based on the new package. It’s an exciting time in Library Technician education – but not without its challenges. You can get a full update when ALIA’s Director: Professional Services, Janetta Mascilongo, delivers her paper at the ALIA National Library and Information Technicians Conference, Back to Basics, this month.

Paramount sponsors Libtech

ALIA welcomes Paramount Business Supplies as a valued sponsor of the 2011 ALIA Library Technicians Conference in Perth this month. Paramount provide a wide range of equipment and supplies, and can supply anything from a custom-built chair to a full fit-out. Check out their website at www.paramounts.com.au.
PERTH 2011: must see, must do

Tuesday September 13
Let's get this conference show on the road! I'll stop by one of the Conference Social Media Booths and take a pic to send to the folks back at work. (The booths are hosted by Perth Convention Bureau, ALIA's social media sponsors for LibTech and NLSS - great idea!)
Then it's time to meet some beautiful people at the First Timers Dinner!

Note to self: remember to go visit ALIA (Booth 5) and say hi to the National Office team. Must ask them about advocacy resources and the National Year of Reading 2012 while I'm there.

Wednesday September 14
Learn to keep my cool at Rachel Green's keynote address Like Water Off A Duck's Back.
(Thanks for sponsoring Rachel, University of Western Australia)

Thursday September 15
Time to find out how to get where I want to go, so I need to be at Alison Sutherland's presentation at 8.30am. Might need a coffee first...
(Alison's keynote is sponsored by Edith Cowan University)

Friday September 16
Elaina Norwin is here from Broward County Library and she's talking about the power of influence today. And I can't miss Sarah Garnett's presentation on the Benjamin Andrew Footpath Library - it's the 'feel good' story of the conference and so inspiring...

Friday September 16
Sticking around for the Final Forum, Back To The Future - great panel and then there's a whole new bunch of people to meet (they're coming in for NLSS) at the Remixer drinks at the Pan Pacific.

Thursday September 15
The IBSA Training Package Review - it's been huge. I'll find out the latest at Janetta Mascilongo's presentation today. And tonight it's time to shake my booty at the Conference Dinner Dance!
Google Map Your Dream Library Tour for NLS5

Perth is getting ready to host fellow professionals from all over Australia at the New Librarians Symposium 5. The conference crews are determined to make it a rich and enjoyable experience. If NLS5 is on your agenda, Hoi Ng reports on just one way you can make magic memories in Perth this September.

Many would agree that library tours are one of the best ways to witness firsthand all the new ideas and programs that may have practical applications at our workplace. We have many maps and Perth has over 200 libraries, a good number of which are easily accessible by public transport, so why don’t we create a map of Perth libraries for conference delegates to enhance their conference experience?

Paige Wright, a library student and past employee of the Town of Claremont Library, kindly volunteered her time and illustration skills to create a map showcasing some of the Perth libraries. Recognising that mobile technologies, such as iPhone and android phones, are becoming more popular among the new librarians, we decided to metamorphose the traditional paper-based map of Perth libraries into a Google Map to reach an even wider audience.

Based on this thought, it was decided to create a map of libraries happy to throw open their doors to NLS5 delegates. An email call for collaboration was sent and library staff from different libraries forwarded their libraries’ details, complete with directions via public transport. To date, 19 Perth libraries are listed on the NLS5 DIY Library Tour Map.

As a NLS5 delegate, you can use this map to navigate your way around Perth libraries at your own pace. If you arrive early, be adventurous, it is your chance to mash it up, and create your own personalised map of the libraries you wish to visit, along with other points of interest and events. In addition to the DIY tour, don’t forget to select the two guided library tours being offered as part of the NLS5 program when registering for the symposium.

Don’t just stop there, turn your Google Map into a social networking experience. You can share your map with other delegates, add your own tips to the map, talk to the locals and make new friends. Work the Google Map and the unlimited all day travel ticket, Dayrider to your advantage (just $9.30) and share with us through your blog or twitterfeed how many libraries you can visit in one day.

Hoi Ng
Chair of Tours & Satellite ALIA 5th New Librarians Symposium (2011)
hng@vicpark.wa.gov.au

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CLOSE YOUR EYES AND DREAM...
We dream, we imagine, we tell stories of the futures of our libraries ... or at least we should, according to Steve O’Connor, author of Imagining Your Library’s Future: Scenario Planning for Library and Information Services.

Often we dream. We dream of many things. We dream that we have won the lottery, we dream that we can purchase a new car or a new home. We dream of what our future partner should be like. In all of these dreams we are using our imagination to create potential realities of what might be, or what we would like them to be. Our imagination shapes and colours these dreams and desires for the future, our future or our futures. These are our ‘stories’, our scenarios or visions of what the future could be like.

In the use of our imagination, we allow ourselves to visualise things which our more rational side will not allow us to believe. We know the odds against winning the lottery; we know that car is really beyond our savings. But we do allow ourselves to think, to dream of things we rationally do not believe in.

Yet do we really allow ourselves to think of library and information services which are beyond our current experience or beyond the rational understanding of the world in which we operate? Why is it we seem to expect the publishing industry, the library industry and our users to behave only in ways which we have already experienced?

We all hear and talk about change with little understanding of how it will impact on us. The future is an amorphous thing that we experience and perhaps embrace with hope or trepidation but with not enough understanding. But we do know the future is about change. As Barack Obama said not too long ago, “you can’t stop change coming ... you can only usher it in and work out the terms. If you’re smart and a little lucky you can make it your friend.” – Barack Obama

We need to allow ourselves to use our imagination to prepare for our professional future as well as our personal futures. We need to create stories, or scenarios, which might be for our library services and our careers. The use of these stories allows our imagination, wider intelligence and research to think about the things we usually do not allow ourselves to think about. There are many techniques to assist us arrive at these stories, known as scenario planning.

Scenario planning is a most valuable tool to encourage considered views of our futures at the same time as we are subjected to rapid and seemingly overwhelming amounts of change. It is an approach that considers different, even contrasting paths from those we might have otherwise allowed ourselves to consider. It is important to understand the future is not linear. It is not straightforward, either at a personal or institutional level. It is complex and confusing. There are many paths, many decision points and storm clouds to cast doubt over our directions.

It is easier in some ways to understand the future through a rear vision mirror: in that mirror we can see more clearly how we came to the present. This view helps reveal the various paths we have travelled, the various decision points that have affected us in our journey to this day. These are the stories of how we came to where we are at present and understanding how this has come to be helps us begin imagining for what may be to come.

By approaching our professional future through imagining stories that might be, we allow many different perspectives to impinge on our planning, even if these stories may delay us making decisions about our future by compelling us to think of more than one possible future. (We do have plural futures, if only we would allow ourselves to create and explore them.) Stories allow different groups to join in the discussion and imagining about the future. Stories allow different sectors of our users and all levels of staff to join in the conversation deciding on the future path.

The crucial thing to understand about the future is that it should not be allowed to happen to us but rather that we should shape it. We should make it our friend.

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Steve O’Connor is a Director of Information Exponentials. His book Imagining Your Library’s Future: Scenario Planning for Library and Information Services is published by Chandos Books (www.chandospublishing.com).

WIN a copy of Imagining Your Library’s Future!

Chandos have generously donated six copies of Imagining Your Library’s Future for the first six ALIA members to tell us in 50 words or less what you think is the most critical issue library and information services face in planning for the future.

Email your answer to incite@alia.org.au and include your membership number and postal address. Competition closes September 21 2011. Winners will be notified by email.

Each month, OPINION features contributions from invited guest writers. The opinions expressed in this column do not necessarily reflect those of the Australian Library and Information Association.
When senior management at Southern Cross University Library put the idea of a Pitch Club to staff as part of an end of year event, the aim was simple: to elicit new ideas from staff, give them the opportunity to sell their idea and challenge the way things were done. It resulted in some excellent ideas being presented that have since been implemented at the library, Karen Jordan reports.

The inaugural Pitch Club in December 2009 saw 11 staff members come forward to pitch ideas to their colleagues. After being introduced, staff had one minute to sell their idea. The audience of library staff were then given one vote each for the idea they liked best.

The presenters of the two ideas with the most votes were then given another five minutes to further present their idea, before the winner was chosen by a judging panel made up of staff from various library departments. To assist with implementing the winning idea, the finalist was asked to develop a project proposal stating the objectives, outputs, costs and timeframe, which also provided an opportunity to develop project management skills.

Not only have the winning ideas been implemented but a range of creative innovations generated through the Pitch Club have also now been realised. The 2009 winning pitch resulted in the launch of SCU Library TV. Liaison Librarian Tracy Tees wanted to have a central resource where students could be directed for help with common tasks.

“The popularity of YouTube showed how keen people are to get information in a visual format so Pitch Club was an opportunity to present an idea that I had been kicking around for a while,” said Tracy.

Now, more than 50 library video tutorials are available in one section of the library website (sculibrarytv.info). The videos can be easily searched, providing a one-stop learning shop for students. Users can also suggest a topic for a video – which supports different learning styles, and also allows academic staff to suggest a library video which would support their students’ needs.

The 2010 winning pitch was Administrative Officer Sharon Barnett’s idea to ‘green’ the library. Following a presentation to the library by the University Sustainability Officer, Sharon began to observe the library’s practices more closely and saw that there were things that could be done better in terms of energy use, waste management and procurement.

“I saw an opportunity to enhance our connection to the natural environment by developing sustainable initiatives that could bring staff and students together outside the confines of the building,” Sharon said.
Sharon’s pitch challenged library staff from all campuses to think about sustainability and to make a commitment to strengthening sustainable practices to support the University’s objectives while connecting them through a common goal. Since winning Pitch Club, a number of sustainable initiatives have been implemented, including posters with tips on double-sided printing and recycling, the recycling of library newspapers and waste paper and campus energy audits. Home energy audit kits will soon be available for loan and development of a website is underway to update staff of the progress in greening the library.

The Pitch Club has encouraged staff to think outside of the box and have their innovations rewarded. It has resulted in real ideas being implemented, and while the winner and runner-up received prizes, the real prize has been seeing ideas supported and implemented.

Karen Jordan
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Libraries now actively create knowledge and disseminate this to the world around them. One concrete example of this is the trend towards the establishment of publishing operations within libraries, writes Nathan Hollier.

The Australian National University, Sydney University, the University of Technology Sydney, the University of Adelaide, Swinburne University and Monash University all have library based university presses, while more presses of this kind, I believe, are on the way.

Libraries can be seen to be well positioned – and have an especially strong motivation – to take advantage of new opportunities to publish widely, deeply and (comparatively) cheaply, afforded by the dramatic development of digital technology in recent decades. Libraries occupy a relatively politically neutral position within the university, they have been centrally engaged with the development of digital content storage, indexing, searching and dissemination initiatives across multitudinous platforms and media, and they have borne the brunt of sharply increased costs of acquiring content, particularly for journals in the branches of science where the most research funding can be found. With the exception of Sydney University Press, which has a ‘pre-digital’ history and is now also embracing digital paths to content delivery, all of the presses referred to above were founded as ‘e’ or electronic operations.

Last year, Monash University ePress was rebranded as Monash University Publishing. The change in name reflected both a conviction that the traditional/digital publishing divide is now a false one, since publishers almost always make use of both forms of technology simultaneously and in conjunction with each other, as well as an attendant desire to operate successfully within traditional and electronic publishing spaces, industries, markets.

So far this transition has been managed - with encouraging print sales, maximised web visibility and some major new works for both academic and more popular audiences either published or in the pipeline – and is helping the press and the library of which it is part to reach out and engage in new ways with readers and the wider community.

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READ@UTS

Helen Chan and Muriel Bazin share the latest on the University of Technology, Sydney Library’s new goal - to create a culture of reading at university.

The Read@UTS project, which aims to improve student communication skills through reading, arose out of our 2010 strategic planning process. UTS has also identified a growing demand for English language support through the results of the university’s Post-Enrolment Language Assessment (PELA) program. The students who performed at lower levels included those with a language background other than English, international students, and new high school graduates. Libraries can help by providing materials and services that encourage students to practise reading and in doing so build up their confidence.

Academic libraries do not traditionally invest in popular fiction however, it is clear that people read when they are engaged and interested in the content. The Read@UTS project involves a number of activities and strategies, one of which is to build a collection of popular fiction and non-fiction materials in digital formats. We believe that these collections will support the development of essential English language skills in reading, listening, speaking and writing. We chose to focus on digital formats to make the content widely and easily accessible. After a careful evaluation process, our Scholarly Information Department selected OverDrive, an American digital content provider that specialises in popular ebook and audiobook titles.

OverDrive is priced on a tiered model linked to number of FTE students. Half of the total subscription amount is available to purchase content (ebooks and audiobooks in the case of UTS, although music and video are also available). The other half is the platform hosting fee for the year. Titles are leased for the life of the agreement and can easily be viewed on PCs and Macs, or transferred to a compatible ebook reader. Users may also download free mobile apps to access titles on popular platforms like iPhone, iPad, Android, Blackberry or Windows Phone 7. The library can set the loan period, number of items which may be borrowed and the number of permitted renewals. The titles just disappear or automatically deactivate at the end of the loan period, so there are no late or lost fees to users. Holds may also be placed by users if the desired title is on loan. MARC records are available for purchase from OCLC so that titles are easily accessible via the library’s catalogue.

OverDrive was launched at UTS Library at the beginning of June 2011, making us the first Australian academic library to provide this service. The next stage of the project will be concentrated on promotion, publicity and training for staff and students. Staff feedback has been positive at this stage, and the statistics are already showing a quick uptake of the service. You can view our OverDrive site at overdrive.lib.uts.edu.au.

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Clare McKenzie shares her first steps to establish a personal network and a professionally satisfying career.

I’m a career change librarian, with almost twenty years work experience behind me in areas as diverse as project management, policy development and customer service. Over those years I tended to just ‘let my job happen’, viewing it as little more than a way to pay the bills and as a consequence was never really engaged in a career. As a late comer to the library profession, I have had two choices: continue to just let my job happen or be proactive about making a professionally satisfying career for myself. Happily, I chose the second option.

Almost from the moment I finished my degree, I have been actively seeking networks and professional development opportunities both at work and beyond, guessing (correctly as it turned out) that this would be the quickest way to get up to speed on professional issues and trends.

Joining ALIA’s New Generation Advisory Committee (NGAC) was the first (and probably best) proactive step I took. As a new professional working in a single person library I knew that while the position offered me plenty of opportunities to learn new skills, it also meant that I would have to work hard not to become isolated, and that I needed to find ways to connect with other professionals, exchange ideas and learn from those more experienced than myself. Since I didn’t really know any other librarians, it seemed the easiest course of action would be to seek out an established group.

Quite apart from the direct professional association with other NGAC members, it was through them that I began to develop a personal learning network (PLN) on Twitter. At first, I just followed my fellow NGAC-ers, then I gradually began to branch out, following some of their networks, dipping a tentative toe into the ‘reply’ and ‘retweet’ waters and slowly picking up a following of my own.

Someone in that wider network suggested blogging every day for a month in June and I decided to get involved, even though I was afraid I wouldn’t really have enough to say. I made a decision to blog about professional issues only and suffered many agonies of indecision and moments of self-doubt during that month but was always encouraged and supported to continue writing by the comments of others and the links back to my blog. I expanded my PLN further during this exercise and felt like I was old friends with some of the participants by the end of the month. I also began to feel like I had a sense of where the profession is heading, who the influencers are, where the cutting edge activities are happening and, most importantly, that I could be part of it.

By the time the ALIA Access conference came around in September 2010, I was well established in this network of contacts and had a lot of fun over the four days putting faces and names to twitter handles. As a result, I believe I had a much more enriching experience at the conference than if I had just gone on my own. Reaching out and engaging with other people is a good way to process and synthesise the conference proceedings. I came back with more networks, more ideas and the goal to try and present at the next ALIA Biennial Conference.

In my current role as an outreach librarian, stepping up and out is central to the job. We are the point of contact for academics and higher degree research students at the university and actively promote the research support services the library offers. All the time I have put in networking, teleconferencing with NGAC members, chairing meetings and taking minutes, drafting and redrafting blog posts, presenting at ALIA events and learning to be confident in my own abilities will come into its own in this role.

I honestly believe that if I had not taken that first (somewhat scary) step into networking I would not have had the confidence to apply for this job, let alone carry it out. Sometimes you can have a lucky break, but as US President Thomas Jefferson once said, “I find the harder I work, the more luck I seem to have”.

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Historically, prison library services in South Australia have relied on donated books from well-meaning members of the public and other benefactors. As a result, most of them are largely full of unwanted, outdated and inappropriate resources. Twelve months ago, South Australia’s Minister for Corrections, Tom Koutsantonis, highlighted the prison library collections as critical to supporting literacy and numeracy, and in enabling prisoners to access meaningful leisure activities. Project Officer Abigail Day describes the assessment project and a long overdue change for the better.

In July 2009 I was contracted by the Department for Correctional Services (DCS) to undertake an assessment of all eight prison libraries in South Australia. A questionnaire was devised to establish key information on resources, prisoner access, security issues and volunteers. The results of these were presented to the Executive Board, and from that I was re-engaged to carry out the development of all eight sites.

So, what does this involve? Three key issues for raising standards to emerge from the library assessment were the need to implement regular library opening times, creation of prison librarian roles and funding to buy new resources as well as a computer with library software to manage these resources. While all sites need developing, three were deemed ‘functioning’ and have been used as the benchmark for improving standards.

The first four months have been spent focussing on three key areas for purchasing, these being resources, furniture and selecting a suitable software supplier. A budget for new resources was established using IFLA guidelines, and core collections for each library were then developed. Each collection incorporates a percentage of fiction, non-fiction, reference, indigenous and Languages Other than English (LOTE), literacy and numeracy, graphic novels and some magazine subscriptions, combining a standard collection with specific prisoner needs.

Each site was also assessed for shelving and furniture, with a strong focus on creating a comfortable area to foster a passion for books and learning. Items such as front-on display shelving, book display easels, returns trolleys and paperback spinners give each site a much more modern feel as well as making books more appealing for emerging and reluctant readers.

Softlink Australia have been engaged to supply both software and hardware that is tailored to our specific needs. DCS requires software to be uncomplicated and user-friendly as it will primarily be used by prisoner librarians and volunteers, but advanced enough to provide administrative access to activity reports and other management information. Softlink are providing us with a hybrid solution – ALICE software (non-internet based) installed on all prison library computers, and Liberty software (internet based) installed on a computer centrally to manage and collate data from prison sites.

Each library will function slightly differently, according to the needs of the prisoner and the institution. For example, high security prisoners housed at Adelaide Remand Centre and Yatala Labour Prison will have access to library services primarily through a volunteer-operated outreach service, run from a central library. Mainstream library at Adelaide Women’s Prison will have regular opening times with rostered visits to increase access, while the Visits Centre in the Living Skills Unit has had a partition built by the women themselves to create a separate lockable space for the library.

Each of the three functioning prison libraries – Mobilong Prison, Cadell Training Centre and Port Lincoln Prison– will have their existing databases upgraded to the ALICE software.

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As prisoners in the Pre-Release Centre primarily attend work and education outside of the prison, there is no intention to greatly develop their library; rather, the focus will be on introducing prisoners to their local public library services. Murray Bridge public library have been providing an outreach service to Mobilong prison successfully for a number of years now, with library staff regarding the prison as part of their community.
The development of South Australia’s prison libraries is long overdue and the overall objective must be to set up a library service that is as self-sustaining as possible. Key to its success is the employment and training of appropriate prisoner librarians, as well as an understanding by prison staff of the library role. A functioning prison library is an important cog in the wheel toward rehabilitation and, for many, a prime opportunity to discover the wonders of learning and recreational reading. As many repeat offenders lack the cognitive thinking skills to identify with another point of view, a passion for reading can help develop these skills. As Atticus Finch in *To Kill a Mockingbird* says, “You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view – until you climb into his skin and walk around in it”.

Abigail Day
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The Dewey Decimal Classification is published by OCLC. Image: © Corbis

Orientating a large group of students to the library is always a challenge. With 90+ new students and one hour allotted for the library orientation this year at Bond University, the team decided to centre library orientation activities for the new cohort of medicine students around the Library Matters blog, writes Wendy Abbott.

Our aim of making library orientation more self-directed and independent and focusing activities around the Health Sciences and Medicine (HSM) Library Matters blog to make it stick in the minds of students as a worthwhile resource to revisit in the future. Two pages were added to the blog, one titled Library Orientation and the other Quiz Yourself. From the Library Orientation page, students could access all the important information they need to know to be able to hit the ground running and make the most of the library from day one of their studies. Screen casts on searching Summon and self-service options such as renewing loans and placing hold requests on library items featured in the Orientation information.

Students then used the Quiz Yourself page, containing multiple-choice quizzes (created with Google Docs), to reinforce the information they had learned from the Library Orientation page. A DIY library tour was also created which students followed to find the most significant parts of the library. Students also had the option to use the chat link on the blog to seek assistance from the Liaison Librarian for Health Sciences and Medicine.

Students enjoyed the self-directed nature of the activities, and the Library Orientation page has been left on the blog for students to return to as needed. An added benefit appears to be the increased traffic on the blog since May this year, enhancing its effectiveness as a tool for communicating library news to students. Statistics from Google Blogger indicate a threefold increase in views of the HSM Library Matters blog - a great endorsement.

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ORIENTATION VIA A BLOG

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RESEARCH AND READING: PARALLELS IN LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Lyndelle Gunton’s son is learning to read, while Lyndelle is learning to research. She says they have a lot in common.

My five year old son is learning to read. It is a fascinating process to observe and participate in, as both a parent and as an information professional. I am thrilled that his enthusiasm for reading is growing steadily as he progresses. His initial tentative attempts were supported by a collaborative effort between his teachers and us to create a safe space in which he could feel comfortable to learn. Our efforts have been rewarded. His sense of achievement in reading has had a positive impact on his self-confidence and self-awareness and other areas of his learning, both in and out of the classroom. He wants to demonstrate his new skill for others and share his new love for reading.

I find the parallels between my son’s literacy experience and my own recent learning experiences quite striking. In 2010 I returned to study to complete my Master of Information Technology (Library and Information Studies) at Queensland University of Technology (QUT), 13 years after qualifying as a librarian. I took the opportunity to conduct a research project as part of course requirements, enabling me to experience a different kind of learning.

In this project, I considered the relationship between information and learning, that is, informed learning. Together with my research supervisor and a supportive cohort that forms the research community in the QUT Information Studies group, I navigated the foreign land of academic research, a process that saw me submit ethics applications, conduct pilot studies, collect, manage and analyse data, and produce a project report.

I found the culture in the LIS research community to be supportive and encouraging of debutantes. I was given a safe space in which to dip my toe into the research arena. Feelings of insecurity and anxiety are acknowledged to be a part of the learning process in research. That community’s support is leveraged through group meetings where participants share their achievements and concerns and ask questions, and was given a boost by my introduction to the library and information community on Twitter and becoming aware of the value of my personal learning network (PLN).

As my confidence grew and the project developed, I found myself able to engage with others; I began to feel comfortable that I had something to offer as a researcher. With encouragement from others, I sought to go beyond the initial project and, with a scholarship provided by QUT, was able to collaborate with colleagues to provide meaningful outcomes in the form of published articles and conference presentations.

While the experience challenged me in ways for which I did not think I was prepared, I discovered through my new-found awareness of informed learning that I can rise to those challenges. I have found a passion for learning that makes me want to share that awareness with others. Like my son, I have discovered a new set of skills and it is impacting on my life, both as a student and in other areas too. I feel energized to learn other things with my awareness and to share that new understanding with others. This desire to share was rewarded with my acceptance as a presenter at the 2011 RailS7 Conference, held at QUT in May, where I delivered my preliminary research findings.

I know I’m not just preparing myself for a different workplace or job in the information profession, I’m preparing for a new mindset, a new way of living, and I like it.”

Lyndelle Gunton
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The library service desk is the main point of contact for most library users. It is the location for borrowing, renewing and returning items, paying fines, finding information, and asking questions about using the library and its resources. How do you implement changes that embrace proactive approaches to the idea of service delivery? Frank Ponte reports on a concept called ‘service triage’ at Swinburne University Library’s Hawthorn Campus.

At Swinburne Library – Hawthorn Campus, we decided to implement a process called ‘service triage’. This concept was first proposed by Reference Librarian Jo Gillespie and originally trialled for a two week period at the beginning of semester between 11am -2pm. It has now become entrenched as a semester activity and is considered a valued component of our library support services.

This service has many advantages. Staff can put on their best marketing hat and tout many of the library services. The removal of physical barriers such as a service desk enables more conversational interactions with students. Students feel more comfortable expressing opinion and asking a myriad and variety of questions. In fact, students will often approach a library staff member without provocation.

The library service ethos is to be approachable, friendly and knowledgeable. These key themes underpin all interactions with our clients – even if the question does not relate to library services.

The aim of the interchange is to engage with the client and provide the best possible result.

Mainly liaison librarians and reference librarians are involved, however service desk staff have been encouraged to participate in this activity as it encourages cross collaboration and also instils confidence in the service desk staff member, who primarily would be answering queries in a more comfortable and reactive way from behind the service desk.

The library staff member is co-located in the public space with the clients, usually near the entry point with an identifiable lanyard to indicate they are Swinburne Library staff. The staff member is encouraged to approach all clients entering the library and ask if there is anything with which they can assist. We often find it is easier to approach students with a student diary as a method of breaking the ice before the conversation begins.

We do need to gauge the level of interest before launching into a diatribe about the numerous services and advantages to student learning each liaison librarian can offer. Body language and eye contact will often provide the best cues in relation to interest. Learning when to resist saying too much and when to elucidate is a critical factor in achieving customer service success.

Queries are diverse and typically include questions such as, “how do I access to the learning management software?”, “where do I find this building?”, “how do I get wifi on my hand-held device or computer?”, “how to I borrow library material?”, or “how do I enrol in this subject?”.

Anecdotally service triage has proven popular, with staff receiving instant positive feedback from students who have said how helpful it is to have someone approach them directly. Feedback forms documenting how proactive library staff are in assisting students have also been received.

Moving into the future, we are considering extending the time frame from 11am-3pm and running our triage service during the busy first three to four weeks of semester.

Frank Ponte
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Public libraries need to go rad

Past perceptions of public libraries can still haunt people who haven’t accessed a library since their childhood. Memories of a grim lady in a dark and dusty room presiding over her treasure trove linger long, and an antipathy to children was imbibed by many would-be young users. The Shire of Harvey library team says this has to change.

Current reality needs to be promoted to combat these gloomy perceptions. But how do we do this for those who have been frightened off for ever? A lively, funky, and well-designed promotional program is needed to get libraries not only noticed, but to change perceptions from sad to ‘rad’.

Radical promotion needs internet and TV advertising, Facebook presence, articles in popular magazines, and inclusion in scripts of prime-time shows such as Home & Away, Packed to the Rafters, and Sunrise. (The nature of libraries as community hubs was well expressed in The Librarians series, although a more positive presentation would have possibly been more helpful).

Radical rebranding using bright and stylish logos on information pamphlets, posters and signage needs to be in public places such as shopping malls, high streets, transport centres, entertainment venues, cafes, hospitals and so on. The message needs to offer buzz and stimulation in addition to our well-respected trust and professionalism. We need to sell a notion or idea or possibility, in addition to the physical product of books.

Radical personnel and in-house overhauls of visual presentation would be effective. Video-store style public libraries with young tech-savvy staff in stylish work-wear could provide a fast-track channel to up-market resources. Books presented face-on and with 21st century lighting and furnishing could be accompanied by the availability of snacks and drinks for purchase. Bigger libraries are already offering extended services such as in-library retail outlets for accessories, stationery and some books, plus coffee shops and child-care opportunities. Should more funding be set aside for these add-ons, despite a possible negative impact on resource purchases?

Radical programs that appeal to all ages are probably already on offer at many libraries – but does their promotion have zest and sex appeal? Do we have the courage to spend more on publicity and marketing, even if it means spending less on resources? We have wonderful resources, but without pushing ourselves energetically in fields including education, community development, social inclusion, personal fulfillment, and literacy, our sometimes under-utilised resources may be wasteful to the public purse.

Radical is not a word that can often be used with some current library staff. Fifty-plus year old ladies (myself included) are often not the face of radical changes that could lift our profile from the comfortable ‘nice and safe’ to something more ritzy and even glamorous. Can we change from warm and fuzzy Milo to bright and sparkly Moet? We have the knowledge, we have the skills, we have the resources. We now need to add a sound market and media presence. Let’s engage some top of the range execs to move us into the limelight where we so much deserve to be.

Ruth Campbell-Hicks
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“Can we change from warm and fuzzy Milo to bright and sparkly Moet?”

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WHAT MAKES A LEARNING ORGANISATION?

The knowledge economy is propelling organisations into a constantly evolving state where they achieve through identifying how they can sustainably adapt and develop in response to the continually changing, 21st century world. The concept of the ‘learning organisation’ has grown out of this need to find new ways of doing business, new products and new markets, all in order to meet the changing and diverse needs and expectations of customers, stakeholders and society at large – and doing so with often limited or diminishing resources. ALIA’s Director Professional Services, Janetta Mascilongo, asks what does it take to become a learning organisation?

Sustainable, long-term performance is possible through an organisational commitment to learning, which it establishes and maintains through a systematic approach to managing human and technical capital. As anyone working in the field of education will tell you, for real learning to occur there needs to be a supportive framework around the learner, including a learning experience that offers relevant content and context, quality teaching, encouragement to ask questions and challenge the status quo, and opportunities not only to explore and experiment with new ideas and knowledge, but also to share and make contributions with the learnings gained. The learners themselves must be engaged and motivated to learn.

In most organisations, the idea of staff development and training is not new, however it is frequently offered in a way that is ad hoc and not necessarily aligned with actual learning needs of employees, nor the development of the organisation’s core business. The application of learning to a real work context also often remains unrealised, leaving employees feeling frustrated and confused as to why they were sent to do training in the first place.

Given the costs of staff development and the commitment asked of employees to participate, it makes sense to achieve some return on investment by ensuring employee needs, organisational strategic directions (and the corresponding core capabilities required to achieve them) and practical outcomes through the application of learning, are included in staff development planning.

Organisational learning challenges organisations to embrace and embed learning practices throughout their activities, processes and policies wherever possible. Employees must be actively encouraged and supported to take up any opportunities for learning and to apply their learning at work to improve or create processes, products and services which enhance performance. Individual and group learning, support for workshops, seminars and courses are all part of an organisation’s toolkit for staff learning. Developing and updating specialist professional expertise is a part of this learning strategy, as is building capacity in communication, conflict resolution, creativity, diversity, flexibility and adaptability. Leaders must set employees up to succeed and facilitate their progress, otherwise all they are doing is paying lip service to the notion of organisational learning.

Leaders and managers must establish an appropriate culture and climate for learning. This requires a shared understanding amongst all about organisational values, attitudes and behaviours. Trust, openness and honesty are essential ingredients in the learning process. The rationale for change and learning must be transparent - without hidden agendas - so that employees can feel secure in their jobs.

Trust enables real participation in learning opportunities. This is important because learning involves uncertainty, risk taking and the possibility of making mistakes. Divulging what one doesn’t know or understand can be confronting for leaders and employees alike, and this needs to be accepted and worked through in order to achieve positive learning outcomes.

In any organisation, there is a possibility that certain groups of employees might be marginalised. For example, frontline employees are often left to staff service points instead of attending important meetings or staff development sessions – managers either being unwilling or unable to bring in casual staff or close the service point for half a day to accommodate staff. Yet they, and the part time employees working shifts covering periods when there are few or no full-time employees on duty can offer really useful information about client needs or expectations and opportunities for improving service.

The learning organisation is transparent, shares knowledge and engages its employees to participate in organisational reviews, developments and projects. It challenges teams and departments to work together to find solutions to meet the changing needs of clients, adapt to changing technologies or accommodate reduced budgets.

The need for change affords organisations the opportunity to learn and to explore creative solutions and previously unthinkable innovations. The flexibility and adaptability required to gain new knowledge and learn new ways of doing things offers challenges and diversity in the workplace that can be both empowering and engaging for employees. A supportive framework, appropriate facilitation and a culture that encourages individual and shared learning are all elements of the learning organisation.

Janetta Mascilongo
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“As anyone working in the field of education will tell you, for real learning to occur there needs to be a supportive framework around the learner…”
Helen Paige is not a librarian – instead it was her postgraduate studies in education that led her inexorably towards an understanding of the knowledge economy we in the library and information services sector know so well. Now, as director of a business specialising in corporate learning using food and cooking to encourage team building, Helen manages ’world knowledge cafes’ for businesses and at professional development events. INCITE asked Helen to describe her deliberate approach to value-adding your networking over that doubleshot latte.

My definition of a world knowledge cafe is a learning community that brings people together to learn from each other in order to profit from in-house intellectual capital, to make a difference, or to introduce change in their organisational practices. The cafe-style approach provides excellent networking, knowledge sharing and learning opportunities. These sessions can make a real difference in introducing change and progress to an organisation.

The major reason my clients are interested in the idea of world knowledge cafes is because they see them as a different and engaging way of finding answers to organisational problems or difficulties, while in a conference environment, it is more about pulling conference themes or thoughts together, during or at the end of a conference.

When planning for a world knowledge cafe, we always start by identifying the questions to which clients really want answers.

For instance, for a legal firm looking at greater organisational use of their intranet, questions focused on asking what participants think is the key knowledge that needs to be shared across the firm and how participants thought they could contribute and add value in the future by using the intranet to share information and ideas. Another example is a recent international conference on intellectual capital in Cyprus, where the world knowledge cafe concept was used at the conclusion of the conference to ask delegates, “what intellectual capital ideas and developments do you expect to live and see?”. Such questions encourage people to think, to reflect on presentations they have heard during the conference, and to have a bit of fun and share experiences.

After the questions are determined, we put in place a number of key elements for a successful cafe event. We set up a suitable and inviting space in a cafe style with tables and chairs for groups of four or five people. We offer refreshments (it is supposed to be a cafe after all!) and encourage people to sit with new acquaintances, and we cover the tables with butcher’s paper, crayons, coloured pencils, and brightly coloured sticky note pads to encourage drawing, creativity and thinking ‘outside the square’.

A host and scribe are chosen for each table. We begin with an introduction of the process and etiquette for the cafe, emphasising the different ways participants can be involved, including supporting constructive dialogue and asking members to enter the cafe with a goal of learning from each person at their table while also encouraging everybody on the table to be heard and, importantly, ensuring scribes capture what occurs. The scribe must be someone with the capacity to ‘dot point’ issues arising in discussion. This is essential – this is the ‘take away’ that provides the capacity for participants to use the information collected later, either individually or in the organisational group. The focus is on the practical and on providing incentives for participants to actively engage with knowledge management in the workplace.

The cafe approach enables conference participants to ‘wrap up’ proceedings and engage with colleagues. Amongst clients who use the concept in their workplace, we have found the cafe approach extracts ”many more ideas in a shorter time period”, as one client put it. That same organisation has since rolled out the concept through multiple regions of operation internationally, using the world knowledge cafe approach to inform strategy across a range of projects.

I believe the world knowledge cafe is another way that all individuals can share, listen, be involved, exchange knowledge, learn from each other and enjoy each other’s company and inputs. And isn’t that what we all should be seeking in the knowledge-based economy?

Dr Helen Paige
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When planning for a world knowledge cafe, we always start by identifying the questions to which clients really want answers.

For instance, for a legal firm looking at greater organisational use of their intranet, questions focused on asking what participants think is the key knowledge that needs to be shared across the firm and how participants thought they could contribute and add value in the future by using the intranet to share information and ideas. Another example is a recent international conference on intellectual capital in Cyprus, where the world knowledge cafe concept was used at the conclusion of the conference to ask delegates, “what intellectual capital ideas and developments do you expect to live and see?”. Such questions encourage people to think, to reflect on presentations they have heard during the conference, and to have a bit of fun and share experiences.

After the questions are determined, we put in place a number of key elements for a successful cafe event. We set up a suitable and inviting space in a cafe style with tables and chairs for groups of four or five people. We offer refreshments (it is supposed to be a cafe after all!) and encourage people to sit with new acquaintances, and we cover the tables with butcher’s paper, crayons, coloured pencils, and brightly coloured sticky note pads to encourage drawing, creativity and thinking ‘outside the square’.

A host and scribe are chosen for each table. We begin with an introduction of the process and etiquette for the cafe, emphasising the different ways participants can be involved, including supporting constructive dialogue and asking members to enter the cafe with a goal of learning from each person at their table while also encouraging everybody on the table to be heard and, importantly, ensuring scribes capture what occurs. The scribe must be someone with the capacity to ‘dot point’ issues arising in discussion. This is essential – this is the ‘take away’ that provides the capacity for participants to use the information collected later, either individually or in the organisational group. The focus is on the practical and on providing incentives for participants to actively engage with knowledge management in the workplace.

The cafe approach enables conference participants to ‘wrap up’ proceedings and engage with colleagues. Amongst clients who use the concept in their workplace, we have found the cafe approach extracts ”many more ideas in a shorter time period”, as one client put it. That same organisation has since rolled out the concept through multiple regions of operation internationally, using the world knowledge cafe approach to inform strategy across a range of projects.

I believe the world knowledge cafe is another way that all individuals can share, listen, be involved, exchange knowledge, learn from each other and enjoy each other’s company and inputs. And isn’t that what we all should be seeking in the knowledge-based economy?

Dr Helen Paige
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_________________________________________________________________________
“I WOULD HAVE COME BUT I DIDN’T KNOW ABOUT IT”

Jasmine Vidler describes how Orange City Council Library has tackled the challenge of keeping Council employees informed.

Each week, staff members at Orange City Council receive a surprise in their email inbox. It varies from a book review to the latest Central West Libraries (CWL) service or next library event. The project started two years ago as a This Week At Your Library email, in response to anecdotal feedback such as “I would’ve come along but I didn’t know about it”.

Feedback from staff also indicated that Council staff were not aware of a particular service such as reserving books or being able to use the catalogue via the internet. Previous emails sent out about events and activities had also been irregular. So a strategic plan was put in place to reach out to the 300 staff employed at Orange City Council, as well as their family and friends, and help spread the word about library services and events through regular Monday morning emails. The Monday email is followed up by an interview with Community Radio on Tuesday mornings, where the same information is presented to the community.

The weekly emails have evolved into quite a talking point, with Council staff commenting that they are now more aware of the range of services the library provides - from Home Library, Bus Services, Inter-Library Loans, Baby Rhyme and Read, Music for Little Ears, and Storytime to Classics Book Club, Pageturners Books Discussion Group, Writers’ Drop-in Days, author visits and other events.

CWL’s objective for this innovative project was to place the library top-of-mind in the target audience each week and increase positive perceptions of the library. This proactive public relations project raises awareness about the library and has established a routine of regular communication and a mechanism for immediate feedback.

The strategy has enabled us to introduce new and established services and collections to this audience and it also allows us to match potential clients with services, while engaging and empowering our library staff to prepare interesting and lively messages about their individual responsibilities. We provide a personal contact for the service or activity promoted in that week’s email and encourage library staff to actively participate in marketing our services. CWL only has to create the content once but we can distribute it many times, which minimises marketing costs and provides potential for roll-out to other CWL Council email networks.

A recent evaluation was conducted by electronic survey. Every respondent surveyed recalled receiving the emails, 71% read the emails and 35% kept the emails for future reference. There were also positive suggestions on how the weekly emails could be improved, from varying the days sent out (because Mondays mornings were often a busy time), to featuring the latest library purchases, and varying the format with PDFs, images and links. We also found out recipients of the service “like to hear what others are reading”, “read the interesting ones, delete the rest!”, and like best “the ones that are short and on one topic of the service”, while others “often pass them on to friends”.

I am seeking new horizons

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www.rmit.edu.au
PUTTING READERS FIRST

Frontline is an online course in the theory and practice of reader-centred work in the public lending library. It is designed to challenge library staff to rethink their jobs and change the way that they work by putting readers first, rather than books. Melbourne Library Service has just completed their three-year Frontline training program. Shirley Bateman reports.

Frontline was designed by Opening the Book, an independent company in the UK, and grew out of their experience of delivering extensive programs of face-to-face training in reader development for library staff.

Frontline has been used in the UK since 2005. During that time, 86% of English public library services have used the course, as have public libraries in Wales, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Currently just over 9,000 people have taken – or are taking - the course. A Frontline certificate is now an industry standard within UK libraries.

Melbourne Library Service piloted the Frontline training program in Australia, with a three-year contract that began in September 2008. Around two thirds of the Melbourne Library Service team completed the program, with trainees commenting Frontline reminded them why they decided to work in libraries in the first place. The biggest challenge for trainees was finding the time to complete the course. Each module contains a lot of information, the learning is substantial and the practical tasks take time – but when staff did find the time, they were always richly rewarded.

There has also been a big improvement in the way our library spaces look since we undertook Frontline. We are much more aware of the need to offer people opportunities to broaden their reading choices and cater more comprehensively to our browsers and five-minute borrowers. For example, we have now installed ‘quick choice’ stands in prominent areas of the library and we have a strong emphasis on face-out display. Now, many of our library users say they love visiting us because they find it easy to choose great books to read.

One of the main aims of libraries is to get books off the shelves and into people's homes. In the 2010-11 financial year, we recorded over 1.3 million loans (excluding e-loans). This is the highest we have recorded since our establishment in 2007. This figure is all the more remarkable when it is taken into account that our collection is very small in comparison with other libraries — less than 160,000 very hard working items. Our Library Services Coordinator, Barry McGuren, attributes some of this success to the Frontline program.

In libraries across Australia, we are moving away from transaction-based interactions. With the increased take-up of RFID technologies, library staff are now free from many of the mundane tasks that burdened them previously. It’s a huge change and some staff, understandably, feel more than a little lost.

At Melbourne Library Service, we see Frontline as a way of equipping staff with new ways of working in the self-service environment, creating new ways to interact with readers, to create attractive, eye-catching book promotions, to reconnect with their passion for books. Our staff have a new-found confidence.

Following the successful pilot of Frontline at Melbourne Library Service, a three-year roll out of the program is underway across the state of Victoria. The Public Libraries Victoria Network and the State Library of Victoria have made the course available to all public libraries in the state at an affordable cost.

Shirley Bateman
Team leader: Reader development, Melbourne Library Service
shirley.bateman@melbourne.vic.gov.au

Read, Inspire, Inform and Enjoy – Central West Libraries email template

“The emails have proven to be a simple and cost effective way of generating word of mouth about CWL services, activities and events. It’s an opportunity for our staff to be advocates for the library to family and friends and allows Council staff the opportunity to respond immediately.

They serve several strategic purposes by showing what we do, highlighting special events, showcasing regular activities that would not normally attract media attention and featuring our collections, resources and professional staff.”

– Jan Richards, Manager, Central West Libraries

CWL library professionals take it in turns to write the emails, preparing them in an appealing style, including images where possible and keeping the emails short. Originally the emails used “This Week At Your Library” in the subject line, but now this space is an opportunity to tease the reader and grab attention. Every email includes CWL branding and email signatures. An email template with the slogan “read, inspire, inform and enjoy” has been designed specifically for this project. The weekly emails are planned with a schedule of topics allocated to staff and discussions of upcoming topics at weekly meetings. Staff have also learnt to display and be creative with emails, about preparing and delay-sending and how to participate in radio interviews.

Manager Central West Libraries Jan Richards, said she was pleased with how well the emails had been received and the project’s effectiveness in promoting the library’s services and getting it into the minds of the community.

Jasmine Vidler
Reading and Writing Coordinator, Central West Libraries
jvidler@orange.nsw.gov.au

For more information about Frontline, visit: www.openingthebook.com

To view the video, Frontline at Melbourne Library Service, go to: www.youtube.com/watch?v=NF0GgDTGzEw

www.alia.org.au
Helping the community

The Queensland Government has published a Community Guideline to accessing information held by government at tinyurl.com/3fpaowo and this has sparked a bit of comment about whether such a document is necessary in these 2.0 days. Well, I don’t know how the Queenslanders decided that such information was necessary – did they do a survey or perhaps they looked at the web stats for their various sites – but I think it’s a damn good idea. What a lot of commentators miss is that there’s a huge number of users in our community who aren’t up on the latest social media tools (even now) and that they need to know the sort of techniques that are second nature to those of us who’ve been immersed in this stuff for years. One day we may not need guides like this, but for the moment they’re very useful.

What the Dickens?

Following the significant success of the National Library’s Newspaper Digitisation project, Dickens enthusiasts worldwide have been called to the colours to complete an ambitious project by the bicentenary of his birth of on 7 February 2012: the correction of the OCR-induced errors in the scanned version of his journal Household Words (and later All the Year Round). The project started with a small team at the University of Buckingham, but when they found the task too daunting a call was sent out over the internet, and now they have volunteers working on about 20% of the journals. My brief experience as an editor has been no trouble at all, and by pure luck my issue concerned the project. If you go to www.djo.org.uk you’ll be sure of a warm welcome.

We’re all different

In planning a trip for later this year, I’ve been doing as much as I can over the internet and have been very pleasantly surprised in how easy it can be – and then we run into cultural issues. People in Scottish B&Bs for instance are mostly happy not to need any sort of deposit, and that’s good. (It’s also better to communicate via email, because when you make a phone call you’ll find that there are no subtitles). Some German booking sites, on the other hand, seem to assume that everyone has a personal fax machine to send a signed acceptance of a booking form back to them. It just shows that you can’t assume that what works for you will be relevant for overseas users.

And on the subject of cultural differences, the people at the World Wide Web Consortium have produced a draft paper on how names are treated in different countries. It’s well worth reading if you’re looking to develop a site that takes into account more than Mary and John Smith. See it at www.w3.org/International/questions/qa-personal-names.

Worth many thousand words

I’m a big fan of infographics (the concept that is, I don’t like the term at all) and I’ll often take Edward Tufte’s The Visual Display of Quantitative Information down from the shelf and just leaf through it making little happy noises. That’s why I was so impressed with the Guardian’s Visualisation of the UK Civil Service (tinyurl.com/64mo6bo). You can print it off in PDF form if you like; it’s much better though to use their Prezi version which lets you navigate around the chart and zoom in on particular departments. More people should definitely be using Prezi (prezi.com/) for their presentations.

More on ebooks

All newspapers are looking at deriving new revenue streams from the work of their professional staff, and there’s an interesting take on this from The Guardian. They’re calling it Guardian Shorts, and they’re a series of ebooks that you’ll be able to buy through the Amazon Kindle and Apple iTunes stores. These have commentary on current events, and are up to 30,000 words each, costing less than £4. The first is Phone Hacking: How The Guardian Broke The Story. You can read more about their plans at www.guardian.co.uk/mobile/guardian-shorts-faq, where they address the obvious issue – if you’ve already read it for free on their website, why would you pay extra for the Short? They explain that each of these books will have a lot more detail than what’s already been published. Top marks to them for trying something new.
Navigating a new flight path

Alisa Howlett is putting the (Information) into aviation.

Did I think aviation was a career possibility for information professionals? Think again. I stumbled upon my first library opportunity last year as a Technical Librarian for a regional airline. Surviving a steep learning curve, I have since moved on to a similar position at Virgin Australia. I've been asked what it is I actually do in aviation, so it's time I shed some light on this ever-changing industry I have come to appreciate and to which I have become (almost) addicted.

An airline’s engineering functions involve a massive amount of aircraft technical data, manuals and other documentation. To give you an idea, nearly every component installed on an aircraft has a manual for its maintenance. That’s a lot of manuals! But wait, there’s more. Documentation, such as ‘service bulletins’, and many other document types are also issued by vendors who either manufacture the aircraft and/or the parts.

There are two functions of my role which are absolutely critical to the Engineering Department: currency and control over distribution and access to technical data and documentation. There are two reasons why. Firstly, in order to continually improve an aircraft’s reliability, the latest data, advice and instructions issued by the manufacturer are required, and secondly, technical data and documentation is like intellectual property, only those who carry out maintenance tasks on the airline’s aircraft may have access (they are called ‘copyholders’). It is the responsibility of the technical library to ensure the collection is maintained and managed in a manner which responds effectively to the information needs of its users, as well as ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements directed by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority (CASA) and the Civil Aviation Act 1988.

I may have swapped the Dewey Decimals for Air Transport Association (ATA) Chapters, but a library and information management role within the Engineering and Maintenance Department of an airline isn’t so strange, I assure you.

Skills and knowledge can contribute to implementing and maintaining improved information services, and managing and coordinating the flow of technical data and information within the Engineering Department, I take a proactive approach to navigating my own ‘flight path’ within Virgin Australia and the aviation industry. Led by my commitment and support from other information professionals and my supervisor, my flight path gives me the potential to pursue and create a niche in the profession.

Without a doubt, I work in a unique setting for an information professional. Aviation is an exciting industry; every day I see aeroplanes take off and land, and it’s satisfying to know my role makes a significant contribution to keeping the fleet in the air.

Alisa Howlett
acrystelle@gmail.com

Alisa Howlett has recently embarked on a career as an Information professional in Australia’s aviation industry. In addition to her work, Alisa is a Coordinator for Queensland’s ALIA New Graduates Group. A Masters student at QUT and completing her studies in Library and Information Science, Alisa is committed to continued, active participation in the profession. She will be presenting at the New Librarians Symposium in Perth this year.

Follow Alisa’s ‘flight path’ on: - acrystelle.com and on Twitter - @acrystelle
A LIFE TO CROW ABOUT: ARTHUR MORTIMER

South Australian library and information professionals have marked the passing of Arthur Mortimer, longtime library services lobbyist and founder of CROW (Concerned Residents of the West), a devoted band of supporters for the development of municipal library services in that state.

Arthur’s professional career began in 1949 and led to a wide variety of roles in the (now) State Library of SA, as Director of the Northern Territory Library Service, at the Weapons Research Establishment (forerunner of today’s Defence Science and Technology Organisation, DSTO) and the South Australian Institute of Technology (SAIT, now University of SA).

Arthur Mortimer knew the power of the media and a community voice better than most library professionals back when CROW was created in the early 1970s. At that time, SA had only six municipal libraries and the western suburbs were particularly poorly served. Arthur and his fledgling radicals were an early example of the power of public relations as we recognise it today, concocting a series of political ploys such as setting up a demonstration library on the SAIT campus during Library Week in 1974 and another in an old shoe shop for Library Week 1975 and, in 1977, threatening to borrow all the books from the State Library and transfer them to the book-deprived Port Adelaide area.

Using Dr Seuss’ imagery from Horton Hatches the Egg, CROW sent dried egg powder and origami elephants to several federal politicians and finally convinced Premier Don Dunstan to give a book reading of Horton. It is said that Dunstan later told Jim Crawford, then Chairman of the Library’s Board, “Here, take $2m for your public libraries, but get Arthur Mortimer off my back!”

Arthur kept at the federal pollies, sending chocolate Easter eggs to the likes of Malcolm Fraser and Bill Hayden in 1979 and much, much more. He was still writing letters to the editor about library funding late into his life, long after his lifelong devotion to libraries and his achievements were recognised in 1996, when he was awarded a Merit Award by ALIA.

According to Arthur, if it is necessary to have a revolution, it should always be in fun. And if today’s library and information professionals are smart, it’s a rule, and a man, we will long remember.

Prepared from material supplied by John Mellowship

FAREWELL TO QUEENSLAND’S STATE LIBRARIAN

The State Library of Queensland is farewelling State Librarian Lea Giles-Peters after ten years in the role.

Chair of the Library Board of Queensland Emeritus Professor Roly Sussex said Lea had led the transformation of the State Library to its current nationally and internationally recognised role as a pace-setter.

Lea will finish in October and said she would be seeking other challenges but will continue to take a great interest in the ongoing success of the State Library.

A selection panel is being established to begin the recruitment process for Lea’s successor.

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INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR SUE REYNOLDS

Dr Sue Reynolds, Program Director, Master of Information Management at RMIT University, has been named as the winner of the prestigious Phyllis Dain Library History Award for 2011. She is the first non-American to receive this award, which is given every two years by the Library History Round Table of the American Library Association for an outstanding dissertation that embodies original research on a significant topic relating to the history of libraries, librarianship or information science.

Sue’s dissertation, The Establishment of the Library of the Supreme Court of Victoria, 1851–1884: Antecedents, Foundation, and Legacy impressed the Committee, particularly with her depth of research, lucid and engaging prose and her ability to place the history of the library within a larger historical context. The Committee praised Reynolds’s work for “setting a new standard for the history of a specific library.”

Sue made a flying trip to the American Library Association Conference in New Orleans recently to receive her award, supported by RMIT University. Brian Corbitt, Professor of Information Systems and Deputy Pro Vice Chancellor Research at the University, said “Awards like this come once in a lifetime and should always be supported and promoted.

“The University felt this award not only recognised the very high quality and impact of Sue’s work, but also reflected the excellence of the team of library academics she works with at RMIT University and the academy of Librarians in Australia.”

Sue says she received notification of the award via email on her phone while waiting for a train. “I gasped with surprise, making the other passengers wonder what had happened,” she said.

“I was thrilled and excited and of course it continued to be thrilling by being able to collect the award in person at the American Library Association Conference. The other fantastic thing was how pleased other people have been for me, especially other academics who have completed PhDs.”

The award is named in honor of Phyllis Dain, a library historian widely known as a supportive adviser and mentor as well as a rigorous scholar and a thinker with great breadth of vision.
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

ALIA TRAINING
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EndNote Training - Melbourne

Course Date: 11 November
Registrations Close: 28 Oct
Delivery: Face-to-face
PD Points: 6
Open to: Members, non-members and partner associations
Course Presenter: Jenny Cameron
Content: A one day workshop designed to help you to use EndNote and train and support EndNote users more effectively
More at: tinyurl.com/4c4ke3j

E-FOLIO: an introduction to e-learning

Course Date: 26 Sept – 11 Nov
Registrations Close: 12 Sept
Delivery: Online
PD Points: 30
Open to: Members, non-members and partner associations
Course Presenter: FOLIOz at the University of Sheffield
Content: This course is an introduction to designing and delivering e-learning courses. The course covers designing e-learning resources along with practical tips on issues relating to this method of learning, including successful facilitation and motivating online learners. Includes the use of Web 2.0 tools to deliver e-learning.
More at: tinyurl.com/47zjcgg

Customise Information for your Clients:
Analyze and Describe Library Materials

Course Date: 24 Oct – 2 Nov
Registrations Close: 10 Oct
Delivery: Online
PD Points: 30
Open to: Members, non-members and partner associations
Course Presenter: TAFE NSW Sydney Institute
Content: Gain the skills needed to create indexing records found in electronic databases used in libraries. These records would typically cover materials not usually retrieved through the library catalogue, such as journal articles, web pages and monograph chapters.
More at: tinyurl.com/4355ems

AND FOR ALIA MEMBERS ONLY:
Writing to Selection Criteria

Course Date: Anytime – on demand
Registrations Close: n/a
Delivery: Online
PD Points: 10
Open to: Members Only
Course Presenter: Dr Anne Villiers
Content: This course prepares you for your next job opportunity, gives you focus and direction, and provides you with the tools to 'sell' your portfolio of skills, knowledge and experience for government jobs.
More at: tinyurl.com/3ndymlz

This is just a taste of the ALIA events on offer. For a comprehensive and up to date list, check the website at www.alia.org.au/events.
Want to list your event on the ALIA website? Group members and office bearers – don’t forget to upload your event at www.alia.org.au/events/Add.
Not an ALIA event? Your LIS event may also be eligible to be added to our non-ALIA events. Contact: events@alia.org.au for more information.

EVENTS

NATIONAL / INTERNATIONAL

12–16 September
ALIA National Library and Information Technicians Conference, Sheraton Hotel Perth WA
Contact: events@alia.org.au

16–18 September
ALIA 5th New Librarians Symposium, Sheraton Hotel, Perth WA
Contact: events@alia.org.au

19 September
Library Camp Australia (The unconference). State Library of Western Australia.
Contact: Kathryn Greenhill, wain@lists.curtin.edu.au

29 September
Public Library Design Forum, State Library of Queensland
Contact: bruce.monley@slq.qld.gov.au 3207

2–5 October
www.asla.org.au

3–4 November

ACT

22 September
Workshop Libraries and learning spaces - embracing changing needs
Contact: karna.odea@ato.gov.au

NT

15 September
ALIA Top End Digital Photography Workshop
Contact: patricia.whalan@nt.gov.au

QLD

26–28 September
QPLA Conference 2011 What would Andrew Carnegie think now?!
Contact: Aggie Partridge, ph 07 4961 9315, qplasec@gmail.com

SA

5–6 September
PLSA Partnering for Success Conference 2011
Contact: janice.nitschke@wattlerange.sa.gov.au

VIC

12 September
SLAV Hands-On Professional Development Statewide Resources Centre.
Contact: slav@netspace.net.au, katrina.dewis@utas.edu.au

This is just a taste of the ALIA events on offer. For a comprehensive and up to date list, check the website at www.alia.org.au/events.
Want to list your event on the ALIA website? Group members and office bearers – don’t forget to upload your event at www.alia.org.au/events/Add.
Not an ALIA event? Your LIS event may also be eligible to be added to our non-ALIA events. Contact: events@alia.org.au for more information.
SA LIBRARY ACHIEVER OF THE YEAR AWARD 2011

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The bridge to knowledge

The South Australian Library Achiever of the Year Award will be held again in 2011 and has grown in presence and stature over time to be a pinnacle event in the South Australian Library community calendar.

This award aims to:
• encourage recognition of a person working in any sector of the library and information profession in South Australia
• provide an opportunity to promote innovation and excellence within the library and information profession
• raise the profile of the profession

Nominations are now open and the award is very proudly sponsored by Ex Libris. Criteria, conditions of entry and nomination form are available at www.alia.org.au/awards/merit/sa.laoty/

And don’t forget to join us for the presentation in the evening of the 15 November 2011 at the State Library of South Australia to celebrate these achievements.

Do joint use, colocated or shared services figure in your school, public, TAFE or university library’s future?

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CONNECTION AND CONVERGENCE:
SECOND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON JOINT USE LIBRARIES

Adelaide, South Australia
3-4 November 2011
Optional tour of joint use libraries 2 November 2011
 Provisional program and registration form available at www.auslib.com.au

ALIA NATIONAL ADVISORY CONGRESS
OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 2011

The National Advisory Congress is an important part of the Association’s planning process and is part of our constitution. It provides an annual opportunity for ALIA members and directors to come together to discuss policies, issues and other ALIA matters. It is also an opportunity for members to provide feedback on a variety of issues and identify issues needing to be addressed by the Association.

In 2011, the National Advisory Congress will discuss the topic The Future of the Profession.

The Board also welcomes participation from personal and institutional members, advisory committees and self-nomining groups.

Details regarding the discussion points, dates and locations will be made available soon at www.alia.org.au/governance/nac.
NEW MEMBERS

Member to Associate
Helen O'Brien WA
Sadia Kamran ACT
Atossa Amini SA
Bethany Cockayne VIC
Natalla Lopez Guzman NSW
Jialiang Li NSW
Danielle Johanssen VIC
Melissa Francis SA
Yvette Parker VIC
Sonja Barfoed ACT

Member to Technician
Melinda Klein NSW
Louise Warren NSW

New Associate
Susan Preston NSW
Tara Mahoney WA
Randall Fitzgerald VIC
Prodip Roy SA
James Walster WA
Jay Robinson VIC
Ann Collings NSW
Wilhelmina Bezuilendhout ZAR
Carrie Stoodiya QLD
Linda Dobson WA
Lillian Prentorius WA
Renata Howard VIC
Sarah Fayers NSW

New Institution
St Michael's College School TAS
High Country Library Corporation VIC
Wodonga Institute of TAFE Library VIC
Trinity Lutheran College QLD

New Library Technician
Ros McMillan VIC
Roselind McConville VIC
Gavin Hawke NSW
Karen Seckold VIC
Jo-Anne Faulkner NSW

New Member
Noelen Crispo NSW
Khatun-e-Jannat Habiba NSW
Ginetta Evans WA
Alison Taber-Landeweew NSW
Krista Hayden NSW
Heather Schrinner TAS
Sue Krust NSW
Carol Corp VIC
Lucila Eismann SA

Nichola Worrall ACT
Jane MacKay WA
Raechel Gadsdon VIC
Clare Margaret Gately VIC
Lisa Given NSW
Grace Pablo Daquilla VIC
Emily Coffey WA
Bronie Harris ACT
Angela Gear QLD
Heather Leat NSW
Amanda Cooke TAS
Kirlly Cant NSW
Sharon Nevin VIC
Morgan Saletta VIC
Faith Pigott NSW
Salvatore Messina NT
Katrina Pinn QLD
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Alison Wood QLD
Jessica Riley NSW
Mirta Elina Irahetta VIC
Julie Marr VIC
Jennifer Pilottos NSW
Barbara Durward NSW
Tanja Carnage CAD
Alison Stuart-Klein NSW
Ling Yin SA
Hans Hagen VIC
Rachel Bavich VIC
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Julie Olston NSW
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Vikki Nemeth VIC

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Technician to Associate
Jane Smeathers QLD
Vanessa O'Farrell VIC
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PROFESSIONAL BENEFITS?
At the University of Melbourne, a library cadet is singled out each year to be awarded as the most outstanding graduate. Their prize is a year’s membership of ALIA. University Librarian Philip Kent takes a look at the professional benefits of such a prize.

Recently I was reminded of the importance of engagement with ALIA early in one’s career. Kathryn Lindsay, one of our star library cadets at the University of Melbourne, was selected for the honour of the Most Outstanding Graduating Student in the Graduate Diploma in Information Management at RMIT. Her prize was a free membership to ALIA for a year. Kathryn was genuinely pleased with her reward.

Schemes like our cadetship program are not new. I remember the concept was alive and kicking way back in many large institutions such as the National and State Libraries.

Many centuries ago, when I was a librarianship student, we had a visit in class from a local senior librarian. He gave us membership forms and encouraged us to join. I think most of us joined. I was working in an academic library already, where membership was widespread and an (unwritten) expectation. The head librarian and all the middle managers that I looked up to were ALIA (then LAA) members.

I was pretty soon active on sectional committees and elected to positions of office or had tasks like arranging the wine and cheese. In those days there were several library meetings in the evenings each month. We networked long before that term was in currency and we had lots of fun along the way. Committee meetings were held at each other’s houses and generally included take-away dinner and wine. ALIA became a key part of my lifestyle.

While I personally think that the disappearance of this regular local connection is the profession’s loss, I have been heartened by new innovations such as the New Librarians Group. Community building and identification with library workers from diverse workplaces was a great part of my professional formation and I am glad that ALIA facilitated that.

Employers play an important role in assisting new members of the profession and professional events and connections are integral to that responsibility. At my library, we preference attendance at conferences for those who are presenting and of course we try to share around these opportunities. I always try to ensure that new librarians get to a major conference early in their career so that they can make contacts and build their own networks. The technicians’ conference is also important.

In my youth ALIA members were also preferred by employers through the expressions of interest process to attend conferences. We were able to obtain reduced registration fees so the staff development budget went further. There was also an unwritten understanding that we each had responsibility for our own professional development. We often paid our own (reduced) registration fees and our employers provided time off. Staff development budgets were smaller in those days but most staff managed to get some level of support.

I understand that many new grads wish we had an official ‘standard’ so that they could point to it when approaching prospective employers. When I was starting out, almost every library position stipulated membership of ALIA or eligibility for membership to be an essential criterion.

Membership does have its benefits and a realisation of those benefits will hopefully assure more members to sustain our Association.

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“Employers play an important role in assisting new members of the profession...”
Anita Heiss writes children’s, adult and historical fiction. She has been published widely and performs her work internationally. She is an Indigenous Literacy Day Ambassador and a Books in Homes Ambassador, and she supports the National Year of Reading because “reading is the key that opens to the door to every aspect of life”. Anita’s latest book is Paris Dreaming and her next book, Am I black enough for you: a memoir on identity will be in bookstores in 2012.

Anita says, “I realised reading was the key when I met young Indigenous Australians who couldn’t read and therefore didn’t have the same opportunities as those who were literate. They were without the chance to have a certain form of entertainment, they couldn’t escape to different places and times via novels and other books, and indeed, they couldn’t get through some basic parts of the day like reading important information like warning labels and street signs. Every aspect of our daily life requires us to be able to read.

“Through the Indigenous Literacy Foundation (www.indigenoussliteracyfoundation.org.au/), we have the people on the ground to run programs and choose the appropriate books, but it will take a much greater community effort to ensure that eventually all our kids will have the same reading abilities as their non-Indigenous urban counterparts.

“I hope that all my books challenge non-Indigenous readers to consider their own perceptions of, and engagement with, Indigenous Australia. For my Indigenous readers, I hope they see some of themselves and / or their history, culture and community on the pages of my books.”