

FRONT LINE



Jeff Gregory

As I begin this article I am both excited and concerned. Excited because the Library Technician Section has the opportunity to contribute to an edition of *inCite* dedicated to library technician issues. My concern is centred around one of the initial reasons for this *inCite* — MORALE!

The morale of library technicians is in need of a boost. Technicians are an important part of the library community, and an integral part of ALIA. As trite as this may sound, I think it needs to be

restated. In a conversation I had with Lynn Allen recently, she stated that "library technicians are not 'pretend' librarians", and I wholeheartedly agree. Technicians have their own identity, achievements to be proud of, and the potential to strive for further goals, despite hard times.

It goes without saying that technicians have not progressed this far without a great deal of assistance from ALIA. At this time, when the morale of library technician members of ALIA appears to have dwindled, probably for many reasons including the effects of award restructuring, library technicians continue to look towards ALIA for action. Perhaps we need to remind ourselves that library technicians are a significant part of ALIA, and we need to be vitally involved with ALIA in addressing our own issues.

At present, not enough technicians are participating in the solving of our, library technicians, problems. This is reflected in the lack of nominations for positions on some of the State Group Committees and the National Executive. The positions appear daunting, for to take one on not only means becoming more active, it means motivating fellow library technicians to become more active, however, much satisfaction can be gained from being at the forefront of library technician action.

The lack of participation in some States greatly concerns the National Executive, which incidentally still has vacancies, and will be a major discussion point at the Section's AGM during the ALIA Conference in Perth. We all need to know all of the issues, whether they are causing low morale or not, and more importantly, we all need to deal with those issues.

On a positive note, award restructuring in the Northern Territory has been beneficial for library technicians. There are three levels of library technicians and the majority of the base Level 1 positions have been upgraded. The career path has improved, and a wage increase is being implemented. An interesting move towards freeing up units of tertiary courses, to be utilised for professional development, has attracted library technicians to join ALIA, because they want to keep up to date and improve their chances of promotion.

In closing, I would like to thank Lynn Allen, the staff of the National Office, and all contributors, for making this special edition possible.

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National President



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