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In the previous *Picketline* I promised to provide more information on *The Library Competency Standards Development Project* when it became available. The project has now formally commenced and the task force held its first working meeting in Melbourne last month.

The project's broad objective is to identify national competency standards for the library and information industry and to submit these to the National Training Board for endorsement. Subsidiary targets will be to identify variations in competencies by level and linkages between competency levels.

The task force which will drive the project comprises equal numbers of employer and employee representatives, together with members from interested associations, including ALIA. Our representative is Anne Hazell, Past President of the Association's Board of Education. The full task force is

Employer Members

Commonwealth Government representative: Alan Cahill, National Library;
State governments: Margaret Coffey, State Library of NSW;
College and University Libraries: Vicki Williamson, Curtin University of Technology;
Local government and non-government library sector nominees are still to be confirmed.

Employee Members

Commonwealth Government: Gillian Currie, Public Sector Union;
State governments: David Haynes, State Public Services Federation;
Higher Education: Kerry Lewis, Australian Colleges and Universities Staff Association;
Local Government: Caroline Pryor, Australian Services Union;
Australian Council of Trade Unions: Mary-Anne Cooper.

Other interest groups

ALIA: Anne Hazell

ACLIS: Gordon Bower

The project is being coordinated through Arts Training Australia, which is the trading name for the National Arts Industry Training Council. Officers from the Federal Department of Employment, Education and Training and the National Training Board provide support to the task force and there is provision for co-opting of people from other interest areas, such as the Local Government and Joint Australian Public Service Training Councils.

By now many ALIA members will hopefully have attended information seminars organised by Arts Training in Queensland, Northern Territory, Western Australia and Tasmania and will have a better understanding of what the project is all about. Seminars in South Australia are scheduled for next week and Victoria and New South Wales may follow a little later. Regular Project Reports will be prepared and I am arranging to circulate these to all State Branches as soon as I receive them.

The development of competency standards is an important issue and will become even more so as awards and enterprise agreements adopt new skill-based classification structures. The competency standards which are developed could have a major influence on evaluation of library and information sector work relative for wage fixing purposes. So it is particularly vital that those who know most about our industry's real needs—in other words **you**—have an input, if the end product is properly to recognise and enhance the status of the profession. ALIA believes it is particularly important that educators and training providers make their views known.

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For those who want to have their say or simply want to know more, task force members from their sector can be contacted. Alternatively, members are most welcome to call me at the ALIA National Office.

New agreements

There are signs that many employers are moving to create new enterprise or individual agreements with their employees. This seems especially true of private sector and the many small specialist libraries. I am concerned that some members there may have to enter into these negotiations for the first time with very little help, either in the form of trade union membership or peer support.

It is important that you have a firm idea of what you wish to achieve before commencing negotiations. You should make sure you have a general feel for the salary ranges that should apply and it is a good idea to consider new items that you might want to include. You should think particularly about the issues on which you do not wish to compromise. As always, negotiations cannot be expected necessarily to go exactly as you would like. But there is a far greater chance that you will be happy with the results if you have taken the time to do the groundwork of setting priorities to your objectives. If you are not sure where you want to go, there is a good chance you won't arrive there!

I have already spoken to many members facing new negotiations and have given them advice on strategies they can adopt, together with information for inclusion in draft agreements. I am currently working on additional material which can add to that advice. Other members who think they may need to begin negotiations soon are invited to contact me. I will be very pleased to help.