



Anne Hazell
Board of Education

The Department of Education, Employment and Training (DEET) has been assigned the responsibility for defining the training and development needs of all elements of the Australian workforce by the Industry Training Advisory Boards (ITABs). The library and information services industry has been assigned to the ITAB *Arts Training Australia (ATA)*, which has received a grant to develop competency standards for our industry.

During September and October some members of the library and information services industry, including representatives of ALIA, were invited by the ATA state committees to participate in focus group discussions about the future training needs of the industry. The invitations included a paper produced by ATA nationally: the *Draft consultative document: libraries*, which was to be used as a starting point for the discussions. The eventual outcome will be a national Industry Training Plan for Libraries.

The link between the development of competency standards and the National Training Plan is that in future much vocational training will be based on acquiring the defined competencies. Future DEET funding for vocational training will be aligned to the Industry Training Plan.

The ITP discussions at the state level included present and future training needs, modes of delivery, career pathways, links between the different levels of training, and the new Australian Vocational Certificate (AVC) Training System. AVC training, assessment and certification will be competency based. The AVC is nationally coordinated and designed to be substantially work-based. The system will offer a broad and flexible range of training path-

ways, which are combinations of education, training and work experience. The pathways will take account of the many ways people become competent for work and will include all providers of vocational education and training including upper secondary schools, TAFE institutes, industry and other private providers.

As was identified by the state focus groups, the draft document concentrated heavily on the role of information technology in library and information services, almost to the total exclusion of their social, cultural and educational roles. Other comments indicated that the document portrayed a picture of libraries as they were five or ten years ago. State focus group comments were then fed back to ATA which produced a second draft of the paper for comment by a national focus group which met in Sydney in mid-November. The second draft paid heed to many of the comments, but still lacked understanding of the educational role of libraries and focused on technology as an end in itself rather than as a tool for managing information.

At present there is no ATA Executive Officer in New South Wales. As a result, no focus group discussion was held in that state. In an attempt to ensure that the library and information services industry in NSW was able to input to the national Industry Training Plan, the Sydney-based ATA national group invited a group of NSW librarians, in the guise of a national focus group, to respond to the second draft of the consultative document. Some members of the Competency Standards Taskforce, including Anne Hazell, the ALIA representative, were invited. Of the 25 people invited to attend, only four (including three Taskforce

The link between the development of competency standards and the National Training Plan is that in future much vocational training will be based on acquiring the defined competencies.

members) were from outside NSW. There is no doubt that all sectors of librarianship were represented, but responses to the issues for discussion by most members of the group were restricted to the NSW context. It was most unfortunate, that no educator from the higher education sector was present although someone from that sector was to be contacted after the meeting.

The outcome of the meeting will be a third draft document to be circulated to the states via the ATA network. Anne Hazell has written to all ALIA Branches urging them to respond to this third and possibly last draft.

The continuing lack of educator input to the Competency Taskforce's deliberations is deplorable and should be questioned by other members of the industry at every possible opportunity. It is even more essential that such people are involved in the development of the National Industry Training Plan which will take the education and training of library and information services personnel into the 21st century. ■

Anne Hazell is the ALIA representative on the National Library Competency Standards Project Taskforce

If you have already completed an Associate Diploma in the area of Library and Information Studies, either in an Australian university or in TAFE, or have partly completed degree level studies in this area and want to transfer to a different university, you may be eligible for credit for your previous studies.

Contact Stacey Hilyard, ALIA National Office, for a copy of the Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee brochure on *Library and Information Studies: Credit Transfer in Degree Courses at Australian Universities*.