Enterprise, employment, education

The library workforce in the 1990s

The impact of the National Training Reform Agenda, particularly in relation to the development of competency standards for libraries, was the theme of the annual national conference of the University of South Australia Library, held in 1994 in conjunction with the South Australian Branch of ALIA. The 65 delegates from all sectors of librarianship, except school libraries, participated in a two-day program planned to trace the recent history of the competency standards movement in Australia from the development of the Key Competencies to the assessment of library specific competencies.

Speakers from the National Training Board and the Australian National Training Authority described the current role of the government in the agenda, followed by two forums, one on industrial and the other on educational issues, which addressed the most controversial aspects of the competency standards debate.

In the *Industrial Forum*, Kerry Lewis from the National Tertiary Education Union and David Haynes from the Community and Public Sector Union provided an interesting contrast in union viewpoints. In the

Education Forum, Angela Bridgland from the University of Melbourne outlined the problems which higher education has had with some earlier definitions of competence but concluded that the current definition of competence, in which skills, knowledge and attitude are integrated, is more acceptable. Donna Reid from Canberra Institute of TAFE left delegates in no doubt that education for library technicians will be competency-based in the very near future, since the project for the development of National Core Curriculum is based on the Competency Standards.

Chairperson of the ALIA Board of Education, Kay Poustie, described the Association's plans in the area of continuing professional development which include the customisation for Australian conditions of the UK Library Association's *Framework for continuing professional development*.

Keynote speakers, Ann Irving from the University of Central Lancashire, and Alan Richardson from Wellington College of Education, described the development of competency standards for librarians in their respective countries, with Margaret Thurstans from Arts Training Aus-

tralia providing the Australian perspective. Not surprisingly perhaps, since the training reform agendas in Australia, the United Kingdom and New Zealand all have the same objective — that is, the improvement of their country's economic performance in the international marketplace — the process of developing library competency standards in all three countries has been remarkably similar.

Workshops on each day gave delegates the opportunity to express their opinions on such topics as the competencies required in the various sectors of librarianship in the year 2000, managing the implementation of competency standards in the workplace and the impact of the standards on individual practitioners.

Full use of the two days was made by everyone, with all sessions beginning on time, if not before, largely because conditions in the conference rooms during some of the hottest December days in Adelaide for many years were much more pleasant than in the area where morning tea and lunch were served. Proceedings of *Enterprise, employment, education* will be published by the University of South Australia early in 1995.   ∎

LEARN celebrates 5th birthday

LEARN — the South Australian Department of Employment, Training and Further Education (SA DETAFE) Learning

Resources Centres, celebrated five years since its launch in 1989 on Friday 16 September 1994. The celebrations were held at the new Port Adelaide campus of the Regency Institute of TAFE.

Chris Harrison who had been one the instigators in the foundation

of the network was invited to cut the birthday cake and launch several new products of LEARN.

Chris congratulated the LEARN network on its many achievements over the past five years. These have included the formation of a strong network which is used as a model for other networks within South Australia; successful advocacy and lobbying for funds and facilities; communication links such as publication of the newsletter *Networking* eight items per year, network meetings once a term and recently the establishment of an e-mail link between staff; consolidation of network wide units such as the ABN Unit and the Open Learning Information and Materials Clearing House (OLIMCH).

Launched at the LEARN meeting were:

- LEARN Induction staff development module. Nancye Stanelis introduced the LEARN Induction package — a module of the SA

Open Learning staff development package. The module is designed to introduce DETAFE staff to the services and resources of the LEARN network. The module is a self paced learning guide and models the open learning principles of the other modules in the package.

- LEARN catalogue sign. Peter Doolette outlined the background to the development of the sign which has been designed to provide a common focus for the LEARN catalogue at all sites across South Australia.

- *Australian Directory of Vocational Education and Training*. Published by Auslib Press the Directory, edited by Di Booker, enlarges on the first edition through the provision of information about private training providers. This second edition of the Directory includes information about VET courses and personnel in over 800 training providers in both TAFE and the private sectors.   ∎