

Support for new graduates

Kerry Bedford

During the past year I have been a participant in an ALIA (WA) group mentoring program, facilitated by Ann Ritchie and Paul Genoni. The group consists of eleven recent graduates who meet once a month. The meetings provide us with an opportunity to discuss some of the issues and concerns we have in common as recent graduates.

During our first meeting we discussed the expectations of the group, and developed an outline of the program. Initially our primary concern was finding that elusive job, and the topics we chose for our meetings reflected that concern. A number of guest speakers have addressed our meetings during the year including incoming ALIA President Kerry Smith who spoke about getting the most from our ALIA membership.

I have found participating in the group mentoring program to be an extremely positive experience. It has been a source of support and encouragement as I have made the transition from study to work. I have benefited from being able to discuss professional issues both with my peers and with Ann and Paul. The program helped me realise that other recent graduates faced similar problems, and it has also helped me to begin developing a professional network.

Participating in the program has also given me a better understanding of the services ALIA offers to its members and ways in which I can contribute to the profession through my professional association. If I had not participated in the group mentoring program I would still have joined ALIA, however, my participation would have been limited to reading *inCite* and *Biblia*.

Apart from being shy about attending meetings where I knew nobody, I would also have felt that to claim that I had a contribution to make to ALIA would have been presumptuous. Ann, Paul and the other librarians I have met through the program have convinced me this is not the case, and that I can find ways of being involved and contributing to the association and the profession.

In *inCite* earlier this year John Brudenall discussed ways of encouraging younger members to become more active in ALIA. I believe programs such as this are an excellent starting point for encouraging recent graduates both to join and become involved in ALIA.

I greatly appreciate the encouragement and support I have received from the group during the year and I would like to thank Ann and Paul for their efforts during the year.

Apart from an abiding love of books I was influenced by regularly visiting the local public library with my mother. The atmosphere in a library has always been comforting, friendly and a treasure trove of knowledge just waiting to be tapped. I wanted to participate in that environment.

■ E M Connell



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