

# The peer circle

Claire Hill, Rachael Browning, Paul White, and Robyn Gattera

The profession has been waiting for a vehicle like 'The peer circle' for a long time. The concept was the combined effort of Claire Hill, Paul White, Robyn Gattera, and Rachael Browning in Queensland. We had been toying with the idea since our graduation from librarianship studies in 1995 and the final kick came with John Brudenall's *inCite* article earlier this year. He asked for new members to please stand up, we thought we would take it that little bit further!

Our mission is 'To provide a peer support environment to provide an avenue for proactive involvement in ALIA and the professional arena'. Basically it is an opportunity for informal networking and a great way to retain our friendships forged during our student years and to encourage new friendships with others in the library community. We believe that the issues that affect us as new members may not be visible to those already established in the library community. It seems only natural for 'The peer circle' to be driven by new professionals for new professionals. 'The peer circle' is a celebration of the 'face' of new members in the library and information community.

Our membership is quite fluid and all information professionals are welcome to attend meetings or receive newsletters regardless of their status. Initially we contacted current students and recent graduates of the Queensland University of Technology Graduate Diploma in Library and Information Studies and this group represents a large proportion of our membership. Our invitation for the inaugural meeting was also extended to current library technician students in Queensland. We are in the process of contacting those people who are based in Queensland and have attended or are currently attending other institutions offering library studies.

We meet bi-monthly and distribute a newsletter in the alternate month. Our first meeting involved a huge brainstorming session where new members listed ideas for peer circle activities. These ideas were heavily focused on career options and opportunities. Our second meeting was a 'Meet the employers night' where we had four guest speakers who presented in-

formation on the job market, successful resumes, understanding and approaching selection criteria, and the interview process.

The overwhelming positive response for 'The peer circle' is an indication of its relevance for the development of a dynamic library and information community. Here is what some of our members think of 'the peer circle':

*'The peer circle' is a good opportunity for networking between a variety of people that are at different levels of their career as a librarian. It is an informal gathering for exchange of ideas and information.*

Pamela Martin, QUT student

*'The peer circle' is a great initiative. It's important for library students and new graduates to have a support group such as 'The peer circle'.*

Carmel O'Sullivan, information manager

*'The peer circle' provides an opportunity to be involved with a professional organisation and to start 'networking' which seems to be important in this field.*

Sarah Eastwell, temporary librarian

We are interested in contacting new professionals in other states who are enthusiastic about co-ordinating a similar group. For more information about the peer circle please contact Claire Hill, e-mail [c.hill@central1.library.uq.oz.au](mailto:c.hill@central1.library.uq.oz.au).

## ALIA ACT mentoring project

Trish Milne

There is nothing new about mentoring. The Greeks had a word for it: Homer tells us that when Ulysses left for the siege of Troy, he asked his friend Mentor to watch over his son Telemachus. Mentor acted faithfully as teacher, adviser, friend and surrogate-father to Telemachus throughout the ten years that Ulysses was away.

The Greeks believed that we learn skills, culture and values from people whom we look up to or admire and the principles of mentoring have been important elements in the continuity of art, craft and commerce from ancient times. The master/apprentice relationship within the craft guilds of the Middle Ages is a good example.

Mentoring has come to the fore in recent times as a way of human resource development in many organisations. Professional associations see it as an excellent method of assisting younger or less experienced colleagues to move forward in their careers.

Could you benefit from such a mentoring relationship? If you feel that you would like a more experienced colleague to talk to about your career, or if you have ever felt that you would like to use your experience to assist new colleagues, then the ACT Mentoring Program is for you.

If you live in the ACT or surrounds, now is the time to speak up and express your interest in being either a mentor or a mentee. A training and information session will be held in the Mezzanine Meeting Room in the National Library of Australia on 26 November, 4.30pm–7.30pm. This session is intended to prepare people for more effective participation in the program.

For further information and to register for the session, please contact Tracey Batchelor at the University of Canberra by telephoning (06) 201 2312, or e-mail to [tracey@comserver.canberra.edu.au](mailto:tracey@comserver.canberra.edu.au).

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