

Out of the bag

The 1996 ALIA biennial conference here in Melbourne was the first professional conference I have ever attended. I volunteered to work at the conference on Wednesday and Thursday and boy did I have a great time!

You may remember seeing me, I was the lady dressed in bright clothes, outside one of the doors of the John Batman room. I was pleased to be of help to conference attendees. I met some very nice people and heard some very interesting discussions. The trade show was a real treat, the exhibitors were more than willing to talk to me and the other volunteers. The food was excellent, especially the chocolate chip and peanut biscuits.

Thank you to all those who made me feel welcome. I hope to work at the next conference in Adelaide, a most beautiful city.

I missed out on a conference satchel. If someone out there doesn't want their bag, could they think of me, I'd like a souvenir of the occasion.

Karen Pender-Gunn

Countdown to pathways

During the Melbourne Biennial Conference, the South Australian 1998 committee distributed a questionnaire seeking comments from participants about what they like and/or don't like about conference sessions and social events.

Over 400 participants returned the questionnaire (about 900 were distributed) and I would like to thank everyone who took the trouble to give our questions some thought and respond with, in many instances, some highly innovative ideas. Many of the responses directly referred to aspects of the Melbourne conference while others highlighted potential speakers,

format of sessions and ideas for social events.

The Adelaide 98 committee will be taking note of all the comments and if you have any further suggestions, didn't return the questionnaire or were not at the Melbourne conference, please forward them to me.

I would like to thank the Adelaide Convention and Tourism Authority who donated the 2000 Haigs chocolate frogs which were eagerly sought after by participants at the conference and the wine packs and basket of South Australian products which were awarded each day to a lucky winner. Without their support, the promotion would not have made quite the same impact!

The count down has now started — it is less than two years until Adelaide 98 — *Pathways to knowledge*. If you have ideas for the program, social events, exhibitors, or sponsors, please telephone, post, fax or e-mail those suggestions to me or any member of the committee.

Di Booker
Adelaide 98 Convener

Recording our achievements

A conference which is worth running is worth recording well. I have long, therefore, had reservations about the practice of slapping together conference paper pre-prints and providing them to delegates as the proceedings of a conference — what proceeds during a conference can surely only be truly recorded after the event, not before.

My reservations have certainly not been allayed by the so-called conference proceedings provided to participants at the 1996 Melbourne ALIA Biennial Conference. These would have been an embarrassment to any profession but should particularly be so to our profession with its bibliographical and

custodial responsibilities.

Twenty-eight of the fifty-nine papers presented are missing, it has an ISBN but no CIP entry, variable referencing styles, layout, and fonts, and no individual confesses to being its editor. All of these points would be less of a problem if the publication had been called 'Selective conference paper pre-prints'. Unless ALIA now takes steps to produce proper proceedings, those at the 2096 Melbourne conference will only be able to reflect on half a conference, it being probable that no-one then will have the equipment to play the audio tapes of the 1996 conference.

Our predecessors at the Melbourne 1896 conference at least knew how to do things properly. Ironically, their proceedings were a constant source of reference during the 1996 conference. ACHLIS will now try to collect for posterity the missing papers from the 1996 conference proceedings but if someone had done their job properly, this would not be necessary.

Alan Bundy
**Australian Clearing House
for Library and Information
Science**

...and in response

I personally disagree with Alan's contention that any conference which is worth running is necessarily worth recording in published form in its entirety, but I do believe that the topic of the relationship between the Association's conferences, biennial and specialist, and its publication program is well worth debating. It would be good to have input from members as part of a forthcoming discussion on the future of conferences, to be initiated at the November Council meeting and feeding back to Council in 1997.

The organising committee for the recent biennial conference debated and consulted exten-

sively on the most useful record for delegates and decided that papers made available at conference provide a useful basis on which speakers can expand in the spoken presentation. All speakers were actively (and repeatedly) encouraged to supply written papers, and the great majority of librarian speakers, including all but one of those who offered papers in response to the call for proposals, have done so. Librarian contributors who have not provided papers were almost all those who had responded to later requests from the organisers to join the program. In the case of non-librarian guests who are not paid for their attendance or contribution, we certainly asked for papers but are in no position to insist. I believe that the response overall is as good as could have been achieved, and if a full published record is what the Association wants, it cannot realistically be combined with the practice of making papers available to delegates at conference. Our intention is that conference tapes would provide the comprehensive record, supplemented by the publication of significant papers in ALJ and other professional journals.

I encourage members to engage in debate on future policy in relation to the most appropriate record of Association conferences and its place in our publishing program.

**Helen Tait, Convenor 1996
Conference Organising
Committee**

Your voice

**Your letters on any issue of
relevance to the library and
information sector are
welcomed.**

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