

LIS education for working in the third millenium — meeting the challenges

ALIA Board of Education forum

On 7–8 October 1997 educators, practitioners and peak bodies gathered in Canberra for the ALIA Board of Education Forum. The aim: to stimulate discussion as a starting point for identifying and canvassing outcomes which will shape education to meet today's — and tomorrow's — challenges.

Forum participants included representatives from schools of library and information studies at universities and TAFE; ALIA section and branch representatives; ALIA Board of Education members; and representatives from other peak bodies, such as the Records Management Association of Australia, the Australian Computer Society and the Australian Society of Archivists.

Opening address

Dr Brian Cook, pro vice-chancellor, Griffith University, raised important issues in his opening address as he examined the role of the library worker in the changing information environment. Looking at three main areas: the social and economic environment, the managerial environment, and the information environment, Dr Cook outlined 28 knowledge and skills requirements for the future. He identified flexibility, teamwork, negotiation, problem solving and strategic thinking as the key skill requirements.

What was discussed?

Discussion focused on four major themes:

1. Current and forecasted changes in work practices in the library information sector and related areas;
2. Developments and initiatives in education and training in the library information sector and related areas in Australia and overseas;
3. Government education, training, employment and information policy directions and library information sector education; and
4. The linking of knowledge and skills to changing work practices.

Following group discussion and reporting on each theme, Helen Tait, ALIA immediate past president and forum moderator, linked the reports together and directed whole-group discussion.

A report on the Forum will be distributed to all participants, published in ELISA, and available through ALIANet.

At its meeting immediately following the Forum the Board formulated a plan for strategic focus based on the ideas and key points arising from the Forum discussion. The focus areas identified are:

- core knowledge for the library and information sector;

- currency of knowledge;
- aligning the learning continuum to workplace needs;
- collaboration and co-operation between educators; and between educators and practitioners; and
- research directions and opportunities.

A number of membership issues will be referred to the leadership committee for the ALIA/ACLIS merger.

Actions and partners for progressing each of these focus areas have been identified and will be developed further at the next Board meeting, before moving to wider consultation.

The ALIA Board of Education is planning to hold a follow up to the Forum in Adelaide on Sunday 25 October 1998, prior to the ALIA Biennial Conference. ■

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