

# Educating the library workers of the future

Colette McCool, chair of the ALIA Board of Education

**F**orecasts about the changing information environment and the challenges which will face library and information service workers in the near future require that thoughtful consideration be given to library and information services education. The immediate challenge facing us is to maintain the momentum of the education forum held in October. We need to continue the discussion of the key education and training issues identified. We must ensure that planning continues, so that library workers of the future will have the appropriate repertoire of skills, knowledge and aptitudes to sustain their employability.

A first step must be an attempt to re-define the core knowledge which underpins education and practice for the library and information sector. This must be placed in context with other industries. In doing this we must ask ourselves:

- what is the body of knowledge that is unique to the sector?
- is this appropriate for the future?
- how can the core knowledge be interpreted into a model of work for the sector?

An issue for existing members of the sector is to maintain the currency of

their professional qualification by acquiring new knowledge and skills required by the changing information environment.

What is the appropriate role for ALIA in education and training? As the leadership committee draws up a blueprint for the new organisation, it will require input from us all as to how ALIA can best continue to respond to the education needs of its existing and future members. Surely, in general terms, the maintenance of professional standards must be one of the foremost goals. Our challenge is to develop the processes which best achieve this.

ALIA played a leadership role by convening the education forum in Canberra in October. This commenced the formal debate about the shape education and training should take to meet future needs. The ALIA Board of Education has developed an action plan for the strategic focus for future education and training in the library and information sector. This is based on the major issues identified at the forum.

We now have a responsibility to participate in the discussion at branch, section and special interest group level where the issues arising out of the forum will be canvassed. ■

## \$25 000 literary award winner announced

The Patrick White Literary Award for 1997

**V**ivian Smith is the winner of the \$25 000 Patrick White Literary Award for 1997. The award is made annually to an Australian writer whose work, in the opinion of the Award committee, has not received adequate recognition.

Patrick White instituted the Award after winning the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1973. Previous winners of the award are Christina Stead, John Blight, Rosemary Dobson, Gwen Harwood,

Randolph Stow, Thea Astley, Judah Waten, Robert Gray, David Martin, Amy Witting, Peter Cowan, Dimitris Tsaloumas, Elizabeth Riddell, and Elizabeth Harrower.

Vivian Smith was born in 1933 and grew up in Hobart. Best known for his poetry, he has also edited several anthologies and written critical studies of Australian and American poetry, as well as studies of the life and work of James McAuley and Vance and Nettie Palmer. ■

Australian  
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## ALIA Awards for Innovation in Victoria

Nominations are now being  
called for the 1998 award

These awards, first awarded in 1996, recognise innovative practices by library staff in Victoria in any aspect of library activity – for example, design of a brochure or world wide web page, or for teamwork. An award is made in each of the following categories: academic (universities and TAFE); public libraries; school libraries; special libraries; law libraries; and health libraries.

Applications should be sent to ALIA National Office, PO Box E441, Kingston ACT 2604  
phone 02 6285 1877, fax 02 6282 2249  
e-mail [awards@alia.org.au](mailto:awards@alia.org.au)  
URL <http://www.alia.org.au/awards.html>

Nominations close 15 March 1998



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