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## CPD – building the future

As readers have seen in the June *inCite*, there are many changes planned for the new Association. One of the changes which may appear minor, when contrasted with the matters such as new structures, but has important implications, is the introduction of a new category of personal member — the 'Continuing Professional Development' or 'CPD' sub-category.

This new category of membership will be available to any technician, or librarian member who makes a commitment to continue their ongoing training and development. The certificate of compliance will provide clear evidence that the member is endeavouring to keep up-to-date with changes in the industry and the profession.

Members choosing this new class of membership can do this on their annual membership renewal.

By electing CPD-level membership and paying the appropriate fee, the member is promising to undertake eighty hours of development over a three-year period, with a minimum of twenty hours each year.

The member is then responsible for fulfilling this obligation, and undertaking a series of activities, which are recorded in a log book. This will record the professional development activities undertaken in the course of the year. Log books will be audited randomly, to provide external validation to the process.

A key feature is that the broad parameters of the system enable participating members to undertake professional development which best meets their needs. CPD hours are gained from a range of activities and from two areas — generic knowledge and skills, and library and information services. The definition of activities which count towards CPD membership is broad, and includes seminars run by ALIA sections or branches, as well as courses run by external train-

ing organisation, for example AIMA or FLIS Training. The Association is currently trialling this system with members, and officers will report back to the October General Council meeting on its success.

Beyond these formal courses, there is also provision for general professional reading, and interaction at other professional forums such as conferences, and meetings.

As part of the trial process, the ALIA Board of Education will be examining the weighting of the annual commitment necessary to maintain CPD status. Some may argue that eighty hours over three years is insufficient, and that any member of a profession who does not commit to at least that level of development is losing touch with current trends.

Others will claim that this target is very difficult for those isolated by distance, or with extensive responsibilities beyond their work, such as community or family commitments.

The aim of creating the new category is to indicate a commitment to keeping skills up-to-date. The requirements of the new membership category must be achievable by members if they choose to make that commitment.

In introducing this new category, the Association is following the lead set by other professional bodies, such as the Australian Medical Association and Society of Certified Practising Accountants, as well as many others.

The new category will be extensively publicised within the membership, as well as with employers so that everyone realises the value attached to CPD membership.

The introduction of this new category will allow employers to easily identify those ALIA members who are keeping skills up-to-date, and will also differentiate potential employees who indicate their professional commitment by maintaining their skills, as well as their ALIA membership. ■

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