

From *InterACTion* to *Projections/Reflections* and beyond

Marion Boyd and Beth Clary, ACT library technicians section

Hosting the 9th national library technicians conference in 1997 was a momentous achievement for the ALIA Library technicians Section (ACT group). Since then the group has continued to provide a varied program including guest speakers from the library community. Activities have included visits to All States Bindery, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, and NICAN. Social events such as our traditional 'Cool Ule' and Christmas dinners, brunches and lunches have provided congenial atmospheres to network within the group.

Continuing our principle to create opportunities for technicians to gain valuable experience in public speaking (often for the first time) seven library technicians have addressed the group. Jenny Wood introduced the new AIATSIS Library System; and Marion Boyd presented a report on the Annual Council on Library/Media Technicians (COLT) conference, *Support staff building for the future: the blueprint, the tools, the power* held in Washington DC, she also talked about networking in Canadian law libraries. Ursula Macdermott entertained us with a slide presentation on a trip to China; and Steven Cremer catalogued the experiences of a library technician in cataloguing. A visit to NICAN provided an opportunity for Tracey Barrett to discuss what we need to do to change libraries for the benefit of disabled users and for Maxine Edmonds to demonstrate a database of information on recreation, sport, tourism and the arts for people with disabilities.

The group values the support of the library studies staff at the Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT). Students are encouraged to participate in all activities. Mary Gosling and her Library Studies Information class enjoyed Carolyn Cherrett's 'Life outside libraries' presentation in which she elaborated on what can be achieved with qualifications and initiative. At the annual CIT Faculty of Management and Business Awards on 23 June, several library technicians received ALIA Awards for academic achievement and encouragement.



The organisers and guest speakers at a reunion to celebrate twenty years since the first accreditation of the library studies course at Canberra TAFE

The greatest challenge of the year was organising a reunion, and what a challenge this turned out to be. Have you ever tried to track down hundreds of people, many of whom have moved interstate or overseas, have changed names or professions, or have retired?

After months of 'tech-tracking' 121 library technicians, partners, teachers, librarians and supporters gathered together on 15 May at the Hellenic Club in Phillip to celebrate twenty years since the first accreditation of the library studies course at Canberra TAFE. Guests travelled from Gosford, Sydney, Goulburn and the Canberra area to renew old friendships and recall 'interesting' stories. Guest speakers entertained us. Helen O'Brien, dean of the Faculty of Communication and Community Services, CIT — one of the first teachers of library studies — recalled the experiences of the first graduates and teachers. Bob Pymm, manager of collection management at the National Film and Sound Archive, a long-standing teacher and supporter of library technicians, compared reunions with family get-togethers.

Mary Gosling, course co-ordinator, welcomed the guests and thanked the group for the effort involved in tracking down people and organising the celebra-

tion. Roxanne Missingham, president of the ACT Branch, congratulated technicians on achievements gained through the years and gave support in her usual enthusiastic way. We thank all speakers for the words of encouragement and congratulations.

Lists of all graduating years, and various photographs, including the 10th reunion (1988), proved to be highlights of the evening. Guests mingled, made comparisons, and recalled forgotten fellow students. We were pleased with the mix of guests, with all years represented — from the first graduates to those graduating the following week.

The evening was such a success that we will gather in Australian Library Week 2003 for a reunion to celebrate twenty-five years of library technician studies.

The hard work and dedication of Ursula Macdermott was rewarded when she received the ALIA Library Technician of the Year Award 1998. Ursula has also been elected to the ALIA Board of Education in 1999.

Healthy attitudes and enthusiasm will ensure that the ACT group grows from strength to strength in the year 2000 and beyond. ■