

# Victorian Branch trials new structure

Ebe Kartus, secretary, ALIA Victorian Branch

The ALIA Victorian Branch had an interesting year this year. Under Sue McKnight's leadership a different internal structure for the Branch was trialed. Full Branch Council meetings were held bi-monthly, with committees and executive meetings held in the 'off month'. There were three committees as well as the mentoring group who worked solidly throughout the year. The committees were: future directions; CPD and workplace issues; and communication. The future directions committee considered the renewal process and ways to lead the organisation forward: a report on the future structure of ALIA was commissioned from Professor Edward Lim for consideration by Branch. The communications committee dealt with, among other issues, membership renewal. The CPD committee organised a seminar 'Taking charge of your career', which included the *ALIA Career Development Kit*. A careers showcase was held in November.

In the latter half of the year Branch Council invited speakers to address both the Council and members on various areas of interest. Craig Anderson, ALIA president outlined the process of renewal and the future role of the organisation; Professor Don Schauder, member of the Library Board of Victoria and chair of the Victorian Libraries Networking Committee, spoke on the role of the Networking Committee and its current priorities; Ross Gibbs, director and Keeper of

Public Records and Justine Heazlewood outlined the work currently undertaken by the Public Records Office and gave an overview of the Victorian Electronic Records Strategy; and Steve O'Connor, chief executive officer of CAVAL addressed the November meeting.

An extremely successful Australian Library Week was held under the able stewardship of Kerri Pleydell. In one of the events held approximately 120 people attended the showing of the movie *Desk Set* at the Sun Theatre in Yarraville. Before the viewing, Helen Hayes was presented with her ALIA Fellowship and the ALIA Awards for Innovation in Victoria were conferred.

Various other events took place throughout the year. Warren Horton addressed a VicLIS Forum on his time as director-general of the National Library of Australia with a dinner being held afterwards to farewell him. Sue McKnight was part of a panel speaking on 'Censorship: does it make sense in a digital age?' The meeting was jointly sponsored by Electronic Frontiers Australia, Communications Law Centre and ALIA, Victorian Branch. This led later in the year to a joint VALA (Victorian Association for Library Automation) ALIA meeting dealing with the technical aspects of internet filtering and censorship. Another joint meeting with the Victorian Library Network Committee on 'Marketing libraries' took place in October with 100 people attending. ■

## Highlighting the importance of school libraries

Kris Johnstone, president ALIA Schools Section, National and Victorian groups

Key issues for the Schools Section for 1999 were:

- the training of teacher-librarians;
- the staffing of school libraries;
- the position of school libraries after the ALIA/ACLIS merger;
- the positioning of the library effectively within the school;
- the use of technology in schools — context and caution;
- information literacy for students; and
- the teaching of information skills.

In April we responded to a request from the ALIA Board of Education to present for discussion a paper on the education and training needs of teacher librarians and on ways in which the Board can work with the Section on issues critical to the future of teacher librarianship.

Three section representatives (Anne Plowman from New South Wales and Sandra Ryan and Kris Johnstone from Victoria) are working on the Learning for the Future Reference Group in conjunction with the Australian School Library Association (ASLA). The group

has focused on editing and updating the existing benchmarks for school libraries. The revised document is due for publication in mid-2000.

The section has also written a submission to the Rural and Remote Education Inquiry which was incorporated into the ALIA submission. It says in part: '*School libraries remain essential to the acquisition of information literacy for students thus preparing them for lifelong learning ... School libraries, adequately funded and effectively staffed, provide students with an opportunity to maximise their chances of success. Available data indicates that school libraries make a significant difference to student learning outcomes. Although little investigation has been done specifically into the adequacy of library services in rural and remote communities, it is acknowledged that there are significant issues of funding and staffing which contribute to the disadvantages experienced with inadequate library services...*' Anecdotal evidence indicates that school libraries in remote areas fall well short of the guidelines recommended in *Learning for the future: developing information services for Australian schools*.

### Victorian group

The major activity for the year was the joint ALIA/SLAV/MLC/Charles Sturt University conference featuring Jamie McKenzie on the topic of an information literate school community — a very popular day with 250 delegates and lots of inspiration and enthusiasm — and great ideas from Jamie.

Our meeting at Parade College on 26 June addressed the issue of resourcing the new VCE. With input from the Board of Studies and several practising teachers and teacher librarians we were able to develop strategies for identifying and dealing with changes to the VCE. Clearly there are fewer changes in some areas than others and there is unlikely to be the mad panic that characterised the introduction of the VCE, however it is good to have a framework for looking at our resources and for examining the new study designs.

The issue of copyright never leaves us, and the committee took the opportunity on 4 September to re-examine it with particular reference to electronic resources, and also address some of those perennial thorny questions. ■