

Your voice

Censorship

I was amused to see that my recent brief note on censorship has itself been censored, presumably to make it more acceptable to those readers of *inCite* who have led more sheltered lives than the writer, and, perhaps, ninety-nine per cent of the adult population. Instead of the robust Anglo-Saxon expression commonly used to describe sexual congress, and which a magistrate in a district court in New South Wales recently ruled could be freely uttered in public without causing a breach of the peace, the managing editor opted for a more euphemistic periphrasis. This is more funny than it is serious.

Less amusing, however, is the news that a significant number of library educators at a seminar in Adelaide were recently prepared to disagree on the question of intellectual freedom. I am told that they did so on the grounds that employment in some private sector contexts was antithetical to the concept. This may be the case and may carry more weight now that ALIA has joined the corporate sector, but it leads to a more general question: how valid, or how current, are ALIA's policies on such questions as the freedom to read? Would the present-day Association be prepared to actively intervene in any public debate where such questions arose? And if some library educators are prepared to disavow ALIA's position on such issues as intellectual freedom, how can they consistently prepare candidates for entry to the profession? And how can

ALIA accredit the courses which they teach?

John Levett, editor ALJ

Different forums

In May this year, I spoke at the APPEA Conference on Knowledge Management. The APPEA Conference is the major function for the Australian Petroleum Producers and Exploration Association and attended by all the companies in the oil and gas industry. The segment in which I spoke was hosted by the Queensland Department of Mines and the forum of three speakers included a speaker from PricewaterhouseCoopers and the founder of a consulting firm based in Aberdeen, Scotland. This was a premier industry event and as a librarian I had a chance to voice many of the concerns dealing with data management, information retrieval and the IT tools we use in our work, together with the management processes and culture of our companies.

If, as librarians, we are to progress as information professionals and to have a voice in the continuing management of information, then, I believe, we have to speak out at all events which offer us that voice. Ours is a profession that covers many different industries and organisations all of which have annual conferences or seminars. Don't leave the 'speaking' to the MBAs or the industry professionals, look for the programs which allow you to show your skills and how they benefit your industry or organisation. Don't just rely on the library conferences to voice your concerns. Take them to your colleagues in

a wider forum and show them that we have a profession which is forward thinking and which is part of their work-place.

Maureen Cooper, Kwinana WA

Where are all the graduates? continued...

I respond to Glenda Browne's comments [Your voice, p5, May] to the fact that ALIA still very much represents 'librarians' as an organisation, rather than representing a more extensive group of information professionals working in other areas. Through the completion of the Diploma in Arts (Library Practice) coming out with the qualification as library technician/library officer, and with the possibility of branching out into further studies at university, extends the area of diversity of specialisation for the library professional. At the completion of the diploma and the degree in Applied Science, I (an information science graduate) was given the opportunity of moving into a variety of subject disciplinary fields including: archives and records management, graphic design, journalism, librarianship, multimedia, public relations research, web authoring and design. The library professional holding these skills is given the opportunity of performing jobs in a variety of career-focused areas.

Secondly, I also wish to make the point about library technicians gaining and then using their practical oriented skills in the workplace. A component of the subjects taught in the diploma demonstrates a strong emphasis on the practical skills to perform the day-to-day and other specific tasks in library environment.

Thirdly, I would like to add some words to Glenda's comments on the difficulty of the librarian in the public library moving into a senior position, specifically to draw on the importance of ALIA raising the restriction present on the skills the library professional being given greater flexibility to move between different types of libraries (public, special and university/TAFE libraries). Each library professional develops the generic skills they need from these library environments (customer service skills on the information desks, acquisitions, serials, inter-library loans and cataloguing tasks, for instance) in order to perform the daily activities within the job. Some of the jobs require specific skills at times, such as for a children's librarian having the ability to work with children. It is possible for these skills to be gained by the information professional through training on the job.

In conclusion, I highlight the importance that each library professional worker, regardless of their position, be recognised for their knowledge and skills held, and be given the opportunity to put them into practice in the extensive scope of jobs in the library environment.

Katherine Raper, Marrickville NSW

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Your letters on any issue of relevance to the library and information sector are welcomed.

All letters should be addressed to the *inCite* editor and may be e-mailed to incite@alia.org.au, or faxed to 02 6282 2249, or posted to: Your voice, ALIA, PO Box E441, Kingston ACT 2604. Please include your name and postal address with your letter or e-mail.

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