

# River of opportunities



## Joint weekend workshop for library technicians

The NSW and Victorian ALIA library technicians' sections organised a joint workshop, based on the skills and experience of their South Australian counterparts who regularly organise similar events. The two groups worked hard to bring together a wide range of speakers and learning opportunities for delegates. The response was overwhelming, and sixty delegates attended from the ACT, NSW, South Australia and Victoria.

The idea originally came from a suggestion by Trevor McCann (Raeco), who suggested Mildura as the ideal venue to attract delegates from the three states. Raeco provided support, and we appreciated the help from Trevor and Mervyn Murray.

Saturday's first session covered new technology. Presenters included Stuart Hall (Rural Libraries Online), Julie Boyd (Electronic journals) and Papiya Chakravarti (Kinetica). After lunch our presenters concentrated on professional and career issues. We looked at continuing education with Nadine Gardner (University of Ballarat) and Kevin Dudeney (president of the NSW library

technicians' section). Meredith Martinelli (Zenith Management Services Group) was able to provide an overview of the current trends in the job market, and Janette Telford from the Australian Catholic University, gave us some hints on interview techniques. Kathy Sharrad (president of the ALIA Library Technicians' national section) and Marion Fielke (president of the SA library technicians' section) gave us some practical thoughts on performance management systems.

The weekend also provided the opportunity to celebrate the 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the foundation of the ALIA library technicians' section. We enjoyed a marvellous anniversary cake at afternoon tea, and sang 'happy birthday' to ourselves!

The social highlight of the workshop was a dinner cruise on the Showboat Avoca. Sixty-five delegates and guests dined on a four course meal, while cruising along the Murray River. We were entertained along the way by the renowned Raeco singing duo of Trevor and Mervyn, who penned the lyrics, *Saturday night in Mildura*, espe-



Happy birthday! Library technicians celebrate 21 years since the formation of the first library technician's group

cially for the night. Many delegates danced the night away, but the less said about the Chicken dance the better!

Sunday dawned too early for many, but we all managed to be in convention room on time. The State Library of Victoria's Gail Schmidt organised a very practical session on presentation skills. This was followed by a very entertaining session on children's storytime by Heather Fisher from the Gosford City Library. The final session was a paper on library technicians' networks presented by Stephen Coppins (vice-president of the NSW library technicians section) and Kerrie Kelly (president of the Victorian library technicians section). We were all together for Sunday lunch, and then went our separate ways, some of us had a very long trip home!

The workshop provided library technicians in the region a chance to network with their counterparts, and we hope to help them organise a regional library technicians' group. Please contact me for details, at the address below.

Overall, the workshop was a great success, and we have had a number of requests to organise another similar event. Thanks to everyone who helped to make the event a success, including Raeco, Ebsco, the State Library of Victoria, Zenith Management Services Group, the National Library of Australia, and of course the NSW and Victorian library technician committee members. It was hard work, but great fun!

*Kerrie Kelly, president, ALIA Library Technicians' section [Victoria]; State Library of Victoria, Current Cataloguing, 328 Swanston Street, Melbourne, telephone 03 9669 9721*

## Southbank libraries race ahead

Australian Library Week got off to a flying start on 15 May this year and the libraries of the Southbank Institute of TAFE (SBIT) were well in the race. In fact the SBIT Libraries conducted the race!

In keeping with the theme 'Libraries: Here for the long run', the library staff organised a relay race in the grounds of the Southbank Campus of the Institute.

But this was a relay with a difference. Instead of passing batons the competitors passed books at each change so that the last member had a bundle of four to carry to the line.

The books were carefully weighed to ensure fairness to all and there was not much heavy reading — although it was not all light fiction either!

The teams of four, both staff

and students, competed for some great prizes ranging from movie tickets to massages and dinner in the Institute's fine dining restaurant, Skyline.

Other activities during Australian Library Week included demonstrations of student's skills ranging from music in the library to flower arrangement, jewellery making and massage, to ceramics and beauty therapy.

Finally there was the traditional competition 'Big bucks for dumb questions' in which students vied for \$50 open book vouchers, from the American Bookstore, at each campus by answering simple questions about their library.

All around it was a week in which SBIT Libraries won the race for relevance and fun.

*Neil Kilah, Southbank Institute of TAFE*