

Your voice

The two views of CPD

The December issue of *inCite* gave us opposing views on the debate over continuing professional development (CPD). The writer supporting CPD works in inner-city Perth, and the writer who is against it lives in regional Queensland. Could these differing views be another example of the widening gap between town and country on issues that affect us? We saw it in the republican debate, and it seems that we are seeing it yet again in the 'CPD debate'.

This observation may help to explain why I (an inner-city dweller) support the implementation of the CPD subcategory. I wholeheartedly agree with Kerry Smith ('In defence of CPD', *inCite*, December 1999, p5) that the CPD subcategory will enable Association members to have their professional dedication and continued learning recognised by both current and future employers. At the same time, I sympathise with Roger

Hawcroft's complaint ('Don't blame the victim', *inCite*, December 1999, p5) that he often finds the tyranny of distance denies him the ability to attend conferences.

From my own experience, even if the distance to venues does not usually present a problem to 'city-slicker librarians', librarians who work in a city are often unable to attend a three-day (or even a one-day) conference because low staff numbers mean they cannot be spared. Yet these same librarians often try to attend as many workshops as they can at conferences. Agreed, the small distance between venue and workplace lets these librarians attend conferences on an ad hoc basis, but conference attendance is only one requirement for being accredited with a CPD.

From my reading of the November issue of *inCite* (pp 20-1) I understand that CPD accreditation will be given to members who participate in activities such as:

- professional reading;
- formal education and training;
- informal learning activities; and
- workplace learning

Mr Hawcroft says in his letter that he recently obtained his masters degree. As I understand it, this degree will go a long way towards his CPD accreditation, as will the workplace learning he lists in his letter.

I feel that Mr Hawcroft is arguing from a 'them and us' perspective. The 'them' is a supposed 'elite clique' within ALIA, as well as the 'high fliers' who shine bright at conference gatherings; the 'us' is the likes of Mr Hawcroft. I think most librarians (including me) belong to the 'us' camp — I too rarely have the opportunity to attend conferences and am far from being a bright star within the industry. Yet I don't see this as an impediment to my career. I use what I learn from conferences and conference papers in

my daily work. I also use what I learn from my other reading in my job. And this is why I believe the CPD subcategory is a good concept. It will recognise the activities I take part in to develop my professional skills.

Contrary to Mr Hawcroft's assertion that the CPD subcategory is an 'elitist category', I believe that it gives all dedicated librarians the opportunity to have their hard work recognised by their fellow professionals.

Lawrence Jones, Annandale

Your voice

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

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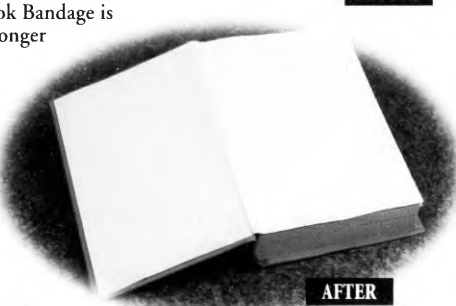
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