

Innovative workplace training

Australian librarians have developed a new style of training package for information services staff in public libraries. Quality in Library Service (QILS) was launched at a joyful celebration in Liverpool Library on 24 November. Chris Williams, Director of Information Services at the State Library of NSW, seized the opportunity to commend the package in glowing terms. He congratulated its creators for setting new quality standards for public libraries, noting that the package was well-suited for use in all libraries. He invited the authors to run workshops for State Library reference staff.

The package is based on national library competencies, and is designed for use in the workplace. Its fully-integrated modules come in the form of five trainee units, together with trainer's notes, role-playing scenarios and other activities, overhead transparencies, and a floppy disc. It is entirely self-contained, and designed for repeated use as new members of staff join the reference desk. Inclusion of the contents on a floppy disc enables organisations to customise the material to their own needs.

The authors, Jennifer Burrell and Brad McGrath, developed the program when they worked in Liverpool City Library, and faced a serious problem as the library's highly-developed document delivery processes were transferred to the reference desk. The first draft of the package was evaluated by UTS, supported by the State Library.

Brad explained that a training program was essential in order to achieve consistent service, customer satisfaction, business excellence, and to assimilate new processes and innovative services. In QILS, these goals are achieved through clear and simple processes, clear expectations of service standards, and feedback on performance. The methods and goals are then documented for everyone to see, and time is set aside to acquire the skills.



Public librarians check out the package after the launch

'It was so much fun', said Jennifer, recalling how experienced and new staff learned together. 'The package is designed to stretch your boundaries, and that's the most exciting thing in the world.' The package allows trainees and supervisors to share this excitement, as they work their way through a well-crafted and clearly-presented program.

Quality in Library Service: A Competency-Based Staff Training Program by Jennifer Burrell and Brad McGrath (1999, ISBN 1 876283 15 7) is available from the publisher, DocMatrix (info@docmatrix.com.au, fax 02 6247 7446). The RRP is \$135.00, but the State Library's support entitles public libraries in NSW to a special price of \$95.00 (plus \$10 postage and packaging). ■

ALIA Government Publications Expert Group

The Government Publications Sub-Committee of ACLIS, was active for twenty-six years. As a result of the merger of ACLIS and ALIA the group is now an expert group within ALIA.

The group has a national focus. Its areas of concern are Australian government publications and government information, at federal, state and local level, including the dissemination of government information; the publishing, distribution, and bibliographical control of government publications and access to them, both paper based and electronic; and the continuation of the principle of free access to

government information through libraries. It is also concerned with the availability and access to collections of government publications from countries other than Australia and the publications of international government organisations in Australian libraries.

The group:

- monitors developments with government publications and access to government information;
- lobbies for change and improvement where it considers necessary;
- responds to government policy proposals and represents professional bodies on official inquiries into aspects of government publications publishing;

- liaises with libraries, publishers, and with other professional groups and institutions where appropriate;
- is concerned with professional communication and raising awareness on matters relating to government publications;

The group attempts to keep the library profession informed of its activities through the e-mail list Oz-govpubs-L. Ask Sue Little, Suelit@lib.monash.edu.au about joining the list.

If any one has any issues they would like addressed by this group please contact the convener Penny Scott, pennys@slv.vic.gov.au. ■