



Natalie Blanchard

New Generation Policy
and Advisory Group

Energise >> Enthuse >> Inspire!

It's December! Exams are over, textbooks are closed, and assignments are hopefully completed. It is time to chill-out, relax and enjoy the summer holidays. December means that 2004 is just around the corner, and for me it is time to start thinking about those New Year resolutions. Another year has flown by. It's time to reassess — did I get fit? Did I manage to run that 10 kilometre fun-run? Did I lose 10 kilograms? Did I finally start saving money? Unfortunately I failed miserably in those areas, but I did manage to succeed in my career goal which was to increase my involvement in the library and information profession.

Why get involved? Well for me it was about setting myself a challenge. I had reached a 'comfort zone' in my current role. In the first year or two after graduating I had been on a pretty steep learning curve, but gradually the pace of development seemed to slow and I realised that if I wanted to continue to develop professionally, I needed to look outside my current employment for learning opportunities. I could have looked at changing jobs, or going back to study — but instead I chose to increase my involvement in ALIA, and I have to say it is something I have found to be incredibly rewarding.

Through my involvement in ALIA, I have developed my project management skills, learnt more about being involved in committees, improved my public-speaking skills (to the extent that I now feel comfortable presenting papers), kept up-to-date with new developments and issues that are affecting our profession, learnt more about different library sectors and most importantly, developed friends and contacts around Australia.

How can you get started? ALIA has a number of groups covering various interest areas [<http://www.alia.org.au/groups.html>] These groups only succeed through the creativity and energy of their members. A great starting point could be joining the ALIA New Graduates Group (NGG). The NGG is an initiative of the ALIA New Generation Policy and Advisory Group. The aim of the NGG is to assist in the transition from student to being an active member of the library and information profession. Membership of the group is open to all ALIA members, including librarians, techni-

cians and anyone interested in the support and development of new graduates.

When the group was established an e-list [aliaNEWGRAD] was also created. aliaNEWGRAD is the main communication forum for the group. It is a place to share ideas, discuss industry issues, promote CPD activities, and much more. Work on the group's website is also progressing. The pages currently contain further information about the group, contact details of the committee members and links of interest. In the future we are hoping to add information about various career paths.

To get involved with the ALIA New Graduates group, or just to find out more about it, contact one of the committee members. The contact details are available on the ALIA website: <http://alia.org.au/groups.moreinfo.html?ID=58>. You do not have to have graduated yet: students are welcome too. It is a great opportunity for support, networking and contributing new ideas to our profession. Give us a call — we would love to hear from you.

We are also seeking people who would be interested in co-ordinating regional groups of the NGG. The aim is to set up regional groups around Australia that will conduct local social events and CPD activities of interest to new graduates. This sounds daunting, but really it is about creating a support group or network of peers that you can discuss industry and work issues with, an environment in which you can bounce ideas or problems off people who may be in a similar situation. Another way of getting involved in the ALIA New Graduates Group is by contacting the committee members with any suggestions or ideas you have for activities or initiatives that you think would be of benefit to new graduates. This can be particularly rewarding as you can work with the group to make your ideas a reality.

I hope that you are feeling energised, enthused and inspired. When it comes to considering those New Year resolutions, why not add 'professional involvement' to the list, and join the ALIA New Graduates Group. It is a lot easier to achieve than losing weight or saving money!

**Alison O'Connor, national convenor,
ALIA New Graduates Group**

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is the new *inCite* column giving a voice to the new generation of library and information professionals. If you have any suggestions or topics for this column, please contact the column co-ordinator, Kate Watson, watsonk@rcc.qld.gov.au.