



**Simon Lewis**

ALIA Western Australia  
New Graduates Group

**Energise>>  
Enthuse>>  
Inspire!**

...gives 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](mailto:watsonk@rcc.qld.gov.au).

## The new generation in the West

**A**s the convenor of the WA Mentoring Group and the WA regional co-ordinator of the New Graduates Group and a 'new gen' myself, I have a strong insight into what it is like to be a new graduate starting out in the profession. I have an Arts degree from the University of Western Australia and a Graduate Diploma in Information and Library Studies from Curtin University of Technology. My role as a reference librarian at the University of Western Australia's Medical and Dental Library is a challenging and enjoyable one. My career highlight to date is my current role as the Rural Clinical School librarian. One quarter of the fifth-year medical students at the University of Western Australia spend a year living and working in the country in the hope that they will become future doctors in rural and remote medicine. My role has been to support their learning by supplying library resources and assistance to centres that are thousands of kilometres apart. I have also visited the Rural Clinical School sites, which include Broome, Port Headland/Karratha, Geraldton, Kalgoorlie and Esperance. It has been a highlight for me to work with the fantastic staff and students of this school.

When I was approached to be the West Australian regional co-ordinator for the ALIA New Graduates Group, I jumped at the chance, as it is my generation that will be leading the profession in the future. One of the major stereotypes, which I am very keen to break, is the idea that librarians are older people. About half of the reference librarians where I work are under 35. One is a disk jockey and another plays in a band. A lot has been written about how the profession faces a shortage of librarians in the years to come. Hopefully, the New Graduates Group will encourage people to consider working in our profession. The formation of the New Graduates Group and the New Librarian's Symposium are excellent steps in our quest to provide support and encouragement to the new generation.

The main activity for new graduates in Perth is attending pub mentoring sessions. Pub mentoring is very popular among newly (and not so new) graduated library professionals in Perth. The format is simple: a pub is selected, a time and date chosen by the WA Mentoring group, and an e-mail is sent to WAIN (an e-mail newsgroup that covers

a large number of information professionals throughout Western Australia as well as students studying to become information professionals). Interested persons do not have to respond, they simply turn up on the night. Pub mentoring began in late 2002 and since its inception new graduates have been keen participants.

So what is pub mentoring, and why is it so popular with new graduates? Pub mentoring is an informal get-together that enables librarians and library technicians to network in a social situation with colleagues from a wide range of organisations. It involves talking to people involved in the profession about their jobs and careers and everything and anything in between. The pubs are always well-served by public transport, so not having a car is not a barrier for people, especially new graduates, attending these sessions. New graduates attend for a variety of reasons. Firstly, many of the pubs are popular with young people, which means that new graduates who may be feeling a bit overwhelmed with the prospect of attending a function with established information professionals can do so in an environment that they feel comfortable in. Secondly, pubs are networking-friendly zones. Attendees can move around easily and are not confined by seating arrangements. It is interesting to note that the new graduates who attend these networking sessions regularly move from group to group. The ability to meet a wide range of library professionals in a short period of time is clearly an advantage of the pub mentoring model. Thirdly, the sessions begin at 5:30pm. This time means that new graduates can drop in after work or on their way to dinner, and they choose when to arrive and depart.

The number of new graduates continue to rise as each pub mentoring session is held. I encourage all new graduates in Perth to come along to one of our sessions. They are a terrific way to meet other new graduates and mix with friendly information professionals.

### **WAIN e-list — joining information**

For the dissemination of information about events of interest to workers in the library and information profession in Western Australia, to discuss issues that affect the profession in the state and to advertise positions vacant. Subscribe to [listproc@info.curtin.edu.au](mailto:listproc@info.curtin.edu.au) with the message `subscribe wain yourfirstname yourlastname`.