

Moyra Best McAllister

BSc (Hons), GDip Lib Stud, GDip BusinfoTech, FALIA

Moyra McAllister is a name synonymous with excellence in Australian librarianship. Educated in Belfast — with a Bachelor of Science, and a Diploma of Library Studies — Moyra's contribution to the library and information sector has been extensive.

As a practitioner, Moyra is one of the few people who can claim to have worked in every library function — cataloguing, acquisitions, reference, reader education, reader's adviser, library manager — and also in every library sector — school, public, academic, special and parliamentary libraries. When she has been appointed to positions of influence, Moyra has invariably left each library in which she worked in better shape than she found it. She has enhanced the reputation and standing of the office, and consequently the library.

Moyra's connection with ALIA began in 1975 when she joined the Library Association of Australia. Moyra has always been an active participant in the Association's activities. In 1993 and 1994 Moyra was president of the ALIA Special Libraries Section (Victoria) as well as being the special libraries representative on the ALIA Victorian Branch council. From 2001 to 2003, Moyra was a member of the ALIA Board of Directors. During her term as an ALIA director, Moyra was able to use her breadth of experience and knowledge of government processes to provide valued advice which helped to inform the Board's decision making. Other positions of note include chair of the ALIA Purchasing and Consortia Reference Group, and membership of the ALIA Copyright and Intellectual Property Working Group. She has contributed greatly to these groups.

Moyra's enthusiasm, her willingness to share her impressive knowledge and skills with others, her desire to pursue better ways of doing things to improve practice, as well as her keen intellect and her creative approach to problem solving are attributes which are recognised and appreciated by all of her peers.

Her passionate belief in the importance of the profession has led her to be an enthusiastic champion for the cause. This has been especially evident in her mentoring work with students and new entrants to the profession. Moyra has participated in the ALIA Victorian Branch Mentoring Scheme as a mentor from the scheme's launch in December 1993. In 1997, the scarcity of mentors led to the formation of the ALIA Victorian Group Mentoring Program. Moyra, as convenor of the group, played a huge role, and her enthusiasm about everything to do with libraries has been passed on to many of the participants, not all of whom were young people — some late entrants to librarianship benefited



Sussanah Vaughan of One Umbrella, Moyra McAllister and Bruce Davidson.

most from Moyra's efforts. She brought a flexible and creative management style to the mentoring scheme. Each year, as the group formed, the program was re-shaped to meet the specific development needs of the participants — as well as the needs of the Association during a period of transition. Moyra's extensive network of colleagues meant that she could always find someone to host an evening or facilitate an activity for the scheme. Her motivation for this has always been the welfare and professional development of the participants. Moyra has also been a very positive influence on her own staff and has encouraged a small enclave of young, active ALIA members.

Moyra is unequivocally a high achiever and leader in that most important and difficult discipline of the practice of librarianship — reference work. She has an incredibly sharp mind and relentless tenacity. Academic staff, students, parliamentarians were all beneficiaries of this very rare and special talent. Her professional colleagues benefited by experiencing the exemplar, and by Moyra's willingness to share her skills and develop them in others.

In conferring this Fellowship, the Association recognises Moyra McAllister's professional leadership, her support of the Association's goals, and her contribution to the development of our profession. She is a most worthy recipient of a Fellowship of the Australian Library and Information Association. ■

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