

ALIA education forum

Marie Murphy, manager, education, policy and research

Some 45 participants took part in an education forum hosted by ALIA at the State Library of New South Wales on Monday 11 April. The forum aimed to continue the consultation process initiated to review the ALIA Education Statements within the context of the ALIA Education Framework, begun in October 2004, and to stimulate debate on the issues and challenges concerning the education of 21st century library and information professionals.

The Education Reference Group invited all those who had been involved in the earlier consultation phase to attend the forum, with the result that a broad cross-section of the sector was represented — university and TAFE educators and other training providers, employers and recruitment consultants, other library and allied associations, and ALIA groups.

ALIA vice-president/president-elect, Dagmar Schmidmaier AM, who had kindly provided the venue for the day, officially opened the forum. Establishing the context for later discussion by participants, Gillian Hallam, ALIA president and chair of the Education Reference Group, outlined the current issues facing LIS education as well as the important role played by ALIA in education for the profession.

An update on both vocational and higher education provided participants with a broader understanding of some of the important issues confronting LIS education. Nicola Burrridge spoke of the recent review of the Museums and Library/Information Services Training Package and the subsequent development of a revised training package. She outlined various aspects of the package and the qualifications within it, and explained how it will influence library technician education offered through the

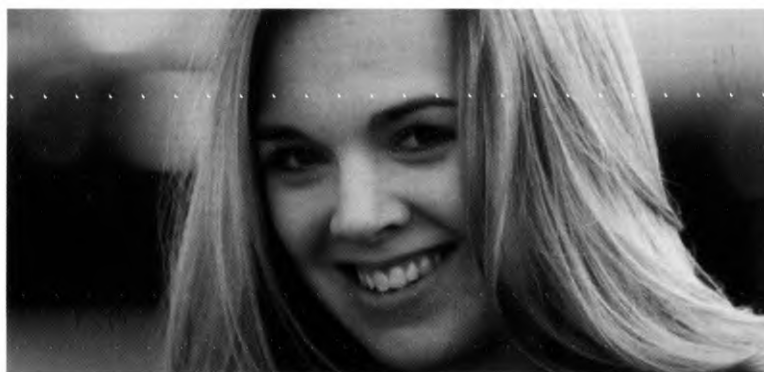
TAFE sector. Paul Genoni from Curtin University discussed the situation in higher education where many library schools have been forced to amalgamate with larger faculties or disciplines. He detailed the structural and financial pressures within the higher education sector which inevitably impinge on LIS courses.

Forum participants were reminded that an integral part of the education process is professional development. While individual practitioners must be prepared to keep their skills up to date, employers must recognise their role in providing opportunities for further development in the workplace. Former ALIA president, Chris Mackenzie described how Brisbane City Council library had set in place a program to enable staff to engage in professional development activities, now incorporated into ALIA's PD scheme.

Also highlighted were sector-specific initiatives, for example the development of teacher-librarian standards by the ALIA-ASLA Policy Advisory Group and the current project of ALIA Health Libraries Australia to develop competencies for health librarians. Relevant work being undertaken by other professional associations in this area was also discussed. Sue Henczel provided insights into the SLA competencies for special and corporate library professionals.

In the afternoon session participants offered feedback on the draft Education Statements, effectively validating them as an expression of ALIA's role in LIS education. The Education Reference Group will now move to finalise the draft statements for presentation to the July meeting of the ALIA Board of Directors.

Further reports on the Education Reference Group will appear in future issues of *inCite*. ■



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