

Out of the shadows and into the limelight



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In this month's issue of *inCite*, we capture some of the moments of Library and Information Week (LIW) 2005, celebrated by library and information professionals across Australia. LIW has certainly become an important date in ALIA's calendar, providing the opportunity for members to initiate activities that will raise awareness of the value of libraries and information services and to celebrate the achievements of some of our talented information professionals.

Generally speaking, librarians as a profession don't often flaunt their talents and capabilities to their clients. They frequently report on the 'seamless access' to diverse resources and the different services that are tailored to individual client needs using 'invisible stitching'. LIW provides an opportunity for ALIA members to step into the limelight and acknowledge their talents and resourcefulness.

During LIW 2005, ALIA West celebrated a special awards night, *An Evening of Excellence*, with the ALIA Excellence Award being presented to Natasha Griggs. Natasha's admirable achievements are profiled in this issue of *inCite*. The FA Sharr Medal was also awarded to joint winners Michaela Sheppardson and Michelle Campbell. This award honours new information professionals: graduands who show the potential to make a positive impact within their particular stream of the profession, whether as librarian, library technician or teacher librarian. The Medal commemorates the contribution made to libraries and to the library profession by Francis Aubie (Ali) Sharr, who served as WA state librarian from 1953 to 1976.

I sincerely support the concept of recognising the potential of our future professionals. As an LIS educator, I enjoy and value the close relationship I have with the students and recent graduates who represent the new generation of library and information professionals. On the international stage, ALIA has been recognised for innovative models of membership activities that encourage and support the involvement and engagement of new LIS professionals. The New Librarians Symposium has become a forum to challenge the profession to take on board new ideas and initiatives. ALIA's New Generation Policy and Advisory Group (NGPAG) helps to strengthen the participation of new library and information professionals in the Association. I congratulate the chair of NGPAG, Kate Watson, electronic services librarian at Central Queensland University, for her energy in exciting and generating the interest of students, professionals and employers in regional LIW events. It was a great pleasure to be invited to join in the professional development and social activities Kate co-ordinated in Rockhampton.

In Queensland, the award for professional excellence went to Bronia Renison, health

sciences librarian with the Townsville Health Library, winner of the Queensland Library Achiever Award 2005, generously sponsored by The One Umbrella. Bronia's achievements spread over a wide range of local, regional, national and international activities. She delivers high quality service to her clients, as well as providing support and encouragement to her colleagues and peers, reaching across the real and virtual worlds.

It is critical that not only should professional excellence be celebrated by the library profession itself, but also that the key stakeholders and the broader community become increasingly aware of the value of libraries and information services. Thuringowa Library Service has helped the Townsville community recognise that it is a centre of excellence. This regional library service gained a two-page spread in the newspaper to promote its award as the Public Library of the Year 2005, presented by the Queensland Public Libraries Association, to highlight the role Thuringowa plays in partnership with the State Library, through Picture Queensland, and with the National Library of Australia through the pilot Information Australia program. This relatively small community has ensured the high visibility of their library service.

I believe that library and information professionals embody the talents and initiative that should to be acknowledged and valued by key stakeholders. In conjunction with LIW 2005, ALIA launched a new initiative that has been designed to identify and promote the innovative work and achievements of both personal and institutional members of the Association: ALIA Stars. The ALIA Stars program represents an opportunity to highlight and promote the success stories of ALIA members and to bring together our award winners to celebrate their success.

You can meet two of our initial ALIA Stars this month — Natasha Griggs, already mentioned as the winner of the ALIA Excellence Award this year; and MusicAustralia, the wonderful result of collaboration between the National Library of Australia, the National Film and Sound Archive and a number of other cultural organisations. Other Stars recognised this year are Marianne Broadbent, awarded the ALIA Fellowship earlier in the year; Kate Sinclair, worthy recipient of the 2005 Metcalfe Award (see Kate's story in the June issue of *inCite*); and John Dwight, who was honoured with the Redmond Barry Award.

One of the goals of the ALIA Stars program is to encourage members to express pride in the amazing achievements that can all too easily go relatively unnoticed within the library and information sector. So it is over to you, as members, to tell us about those people and organisations that you find inspiring and those who truly deserve to be recognised for their innovation and excellence. Let's coax our quiet achievers out of the shadows and into the limelight...

Feedback to your Board of Directors

Do you have an idea, compliment or concern about your Association? Contact any director and ideas will be reviewed at each Board meeting.

E-mail to feedback@alia.org.au will be automatically forwarded to all Board members.

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