

Talented exports

Australia has a new export industry — university librarians. In the last two years, the Council of Australian University Librarians (CAUL) has lost three of its distinguished members to the United Kingdom and Canada. This surely is evidence that librarianship is a truly international business, and there are opportunities around the globe for talented librarians.

Helen Hayes started the trend in 2003 when she was appointed to the position of vice-principal for Knowledge Management and university librarian to the University of Edinburgh. At Edinburgh, Helen is responsible for developing all aspects of knowledge and information services, covering libraries, academic computing and e-learning. Helen was previously vice-principal for Information and university librarian to the University of Melbourne. Helen was the president of CAUL from 1998 to 2002. In this position, she was a major influence in library and information services in Australia. Helen's experience has been seized on in the United Kingdom, where she is a member of the British Library Advisory Council and on the JISC Committee for the Information Environment. Helen was awarded a Fellowship of



ALIA and was named Business Woman of the Year in the Australian corporate and government sector in 1999.

Sue McKnight was the next to depart in 2004, when she took up the position of director of Libraries and Knowledge Resources at Nottingham Trent University. She left Deakin University to move to Nottingham. Sue was appointed university librarian at Deakin in 1996, and in 2000 also became the executive director of Learning Services. At Nottingham Trent, Sue is using her Australian experience to advantage as she is establishing an Educational Development Unit to support e-learning across the University, as well as managing the three-campus library system in Nottingham. She is currently an office bearer in the University and General Research Libraries Section of IFLA and the convenor of the IFLA Quality Issues in Libraries Discussion Group. Sue was a very active librarian in Australia, holding senior positions in ALIA and the Australian Council of Libraries and Information Services.



I asked these star recruits to the United Kingdom how things were going. Sue says: 'I am sure that I will eventually get blasé about going to work-related meetings in London, Cardiff, Oxford, Brighton, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Stratford-upon-Avon ... But it will take a while! It has been a very professionally reaffirming experience to move to another country and culture (yes, it is different) and hit the ground running. And it is so easy to get to Paris, Prague, Dublin, Amsterdam...'

Helen commented that 'The University of Edinburgh is 450 years old and the experience of working in such a renowned institution has been a wonderful opportunity. The cultures are quite different here but the challenges all universities face are quite similar. The need to integrate the knowledge environment into a smoothly operating information infrastructure is my main priority. I have been made to feel very welcome and I really love the town and the Scottish countryside is a delight. I have even taken up playing golf!'

In 2005, CAUL farewelled Janine Schmidt, who has taken up the position of Trenholme Director of Libraries at McGill University in Montreal, Canada. Janine was the university librarian at the University of Queensland from 1993 to 2005. Canada has gained one of Australia's most innovative and dynamic librarians. The transformation of the University of Queensland's Library to 'Cybrary' has become a benchmark and inspiration to university librarians everywhere. Janine was awarded the Fellowship of ALIA during the highly successful ALIA Biennial Conference at the Gold Coast last year.



Janine and Sue were also joint recipients of ALIA's Manager of the Year in 1999.

Janine sent this message from Montreal: 'I am living in a two-bedroom apartment in a McGill University student residence (formerly known as the Renaissance Hotel) and learning to understand the differences between students in Canada and Australia. I have acquired a winter wardrobe, with coats, scarves, gloves and hats — every day is a bad hair day! I am busy improving my schoolgirl French. It is of course Québécois French, sprinkled with Franglais. Otherwise, many of the activities are similar, and putting in place effective operational plans, improving efficiency, preparing briefs to remedy fading physical facilities and redeveloping the website are keeping me busy.'

CAUL meetings are not the same without these talented and energetic people. However, it shows there is no room for the cultural cringe in Australian librarianship. Helen, Sue and Janine demonstrate that when it comes to university librarians, Australia is, as they say, punching above its weight!

Andrew Wells, university librarian, University of New South Wales

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ALIA's excellence awards

Nominations are now being called
for the following excellence awards of the
Australian Library and Information Association

National Excellence Award

The National Excellence Award recognises excellence in any area, field or aspect of practice in the library and information services sector. This award is peer- or self-nominated. Nominees may be: a personal member of ALIA or the nominated ALIA representative of an institutional member; a group comprising personal members or the nominated ALIA representatives of an institutional member; or an institutional member.

Metcalf Award

The Metcalfe Award recognises high achievement by a personal financial member in their first five years of practice in libraries and information services. Achievement would be commensurate with experience and should show a contribution beyond the normal requirements of the nominee's employment. This may include but not be limited to initiative, a commitment to innovation in practice, and leadership. This award is peer-nominated.

Nomination forms

Nomination forms and further information:

<http://alia.org.au/awards/>

ALIA National Office, PO Box 6335, Kingston 2604

awards@alia.org.au 02 6215 8235

Nominations close 1 August 2005