



# Devilish librarians: the Tasmanian New Graduates Group

**F**uture librarian Barbara Gordon has just moved to Tasmania to study the Graduate Diploma of Information Management (GDIM) at the University of Tasmania. She desperately wanted advice and information on library employment in Tasmania for new librarians. So she decided to grill two recently qualified librarians from the Tasmanian New Graduates Group — Rachele and Terri — to give her the inside information.

*Barbara:* What does the Tasmanian New Graduates Group do?

*Rachele:* The Tasmanian New Graduates Group started at the end of 2003 when the first round of students from the new librarianship course graduated. It's a group effort and there are about 15 of us so far. We try to coordinate a range of activities. Most recently the group has organised the Library Week quiz night. Otherwise, we meet regularly at a local bar to chat, organise talks by people who have attended conferences, and arrange tours of libraries for new librarians and the GDIM students. The next event will be a talk from a recent participant of the Aurora Leadership Program.

*Barbara:* How do the Tasmanian new grads keep in touch with each other?

*Rachele:* We are in constant e-mail contact with recent graduates and students. Most of us catch up at events that are organised by the ALIA Tasmania Group as well, and some of us see each other every day at work, which is great for a support network. We are always on the lookout for new people to enter the fold.

*Barbara:* Where are some good places to go for information about the library industry?

*Terri:* Professional reading is something I think is vital for recent graduates who are trying to build on their knowledge. The national ALIA New Grads e-list is a good starting point, especially if you want to ask a question or raise an issue. Attend conferences and training sessions and remember that talking to people with experience is a valuable way of expanding your own knowledge — and they might learn something too! There are also a number of national and international library journals and list-servs you can join such as ALIA New Graduates, Nextgenlib and also many websites aimed at the newer members of the library profession.

*Barbara:* What can I do to make myself more competitive in the job market in Tasmania?

*Terri:* Make yourself known to employers — go in to visit and ask questions when you are applying for a job, put your name down on relief registers, and attend ALIA events (both new grads and ALIATas). Be prepared to be flexible — casual, weekend work and short-term contracts are a great way to get experience,

and show people what you can do, and it can help you to decide where you want to work in the future. Taking part in the Tasmanian ALIA mentor program can also help with job applications and general information about the local library industry.

*Barbara:* What is the employment situation like for new graduates in Tasmania?

*Rachele:* Right now, it's mostly short-term contracts that are available. Permanent positions are scarce, but when they do come up, there are usually several recent graduates at the interview stage.

The State Library of Tasmania is the biggest employer of librarians in the state, encompassing a network of public, reference and special libraries. Other employers include the University of Tasmania, government departments and special libraries. There are also opportunities for teacher librarians.

*Barbara:* How do you find working in a small state where people tend to know each other?

*Rachele:* I've found it to be a positive way of sharing knowledge and experiences in order to provide a better service to clients.

*Terri:* Working in a special library, I find that a lot of librarians I need to liaise with are people I've already met at an ALIA event or at a conference or talk.

*Barbara:* What are the negatives of working in Tasmania?

*Rachele:* Everyone applies for the same jobs, and it's awful competing with your friends, because you want them to get a job but you also want it yourself.

*Barbara:* What's the most important thing each of you has learnt since graduating?

*Terri:* There is always so much more to learn and the only way to learn is to ask; also each job is what you make of it.

*Rachele:* Be patient — you won't learn it all in a month; and never let an opportunity pass — try everything.

*Barbara:* What's been a highlight for you since you started work as a librarian?

*Terri:* The highlight for me is that I enjoy what I do.

*Rachele:* Working with really inspiring people; the ALIA New Librarians Symposium last December; working in Children's Services; and being challenged to learn new things every day.

*Barbara:* You guys rock, thanks!

To join or find out more about the Tasmanian New Graduates Group, contact either Rachele Carnevale [rachele.carnevale@education.tas.gov.au](mailto:rachele.carnevale@education.tas.gov.au) or Terri Maher [terri.maher@parliament.tas.gov.au](mailto:terri.maher@parliament.tas.gov.au). ■

## Rachele Carnevale and Terri Maher

ALIA Tasmanian New Graduates Group

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...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 coordinator, Kate Watson, [k.watson@cqu.edu.au](mailto:k.watson@cqu.edu.au).