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Bronia Renison — making a huge difference!

The call for nominations for Queensland Library Achiever of the Year award, sponsored by One Umbrella, made me think immediately of Bronia Renison, Health Sciences Librarian in the Townsville Health Library — someone I have met face to face only a few times.

The story begins in 2002. Bronia joined the Information Specialists (now Information Online) Group committee as a remote participating member. During planning for the 2003 Information Online conference, Bronia asked if one of the keynote speakers could give a presentation in Townsville, as some North Queensland librarians could not easily get to Sydney for the conference. It seemed a reasonable request if the event was self-funding — a philosophy adopted by the Information Science Section over 20 years ago.

Mary Ellen Bates, a speaker at the 2003 Information Online, agreed to stop off in a fairly warm Townsville from a snowbound Washington to present a workshop on her way to Sydney. Bates asked if Chris Sherman, from Denver, could come too. That meant two people to fund — travel, accommodation, speakers' fees etc. Could we attract enough people to attend in Townsville to break even?

Bronia and her colleagues went to work. They did much of the organising and promotion for the *Online in Townsville* workshop and, on 17 January 2003, 40 public, school, special and academic librarians from Darwin, Mt Isa, Weipa and up and down the Queensland coast, as well as some medical staff, crowded into the gynaecology auditorium of the Townsville Hospital for a very successful *Power Searching with the Pros* workshop.

Two years later, during planning for Information Online 2005, Bronia asked the same question. This time the guest speaker was Joan Frye Williams from California, who presented two workshops — *They're from Mars, We're from Reference*; and later *Directions and Possibilities for Web-based Services*. Again nearly 40 librarians came from as far away as Brisbane for *Online On Tour* in Townsville.

To me Bronia is inspirational because she cares about her colleagues, she is professional and imaginative, she has a 'can do' attitude, and she is generous with her time. I felt her work deserved recognition.



Winner of the 2005 Queensland Library Achiever of the Year award, Bronia Renison is shown here with Joan Frye Williams at the Online On Tour event in Townsville earlier this year

But there is more. When preparing the nomination I found that in addition to these workshops and her day job running the Townsville Hospital Library:

- from 1998 to 2000 Bronia was editor and/or on the editorial team for *Quill*
- Bronia is an active member in the Health Libraries Group of ALIA and the Information Online Group, and was a committee member of the ALIA Townsville Group from 1995 to 2002
- with John McKinlay of James Cook University, Bronia developed a formula for shared funding between an established special library and a university offering new courses in health sciences
- Bronia supports a hospital library in Papua New Guinea with donations of journals and, in December 2004, she provided a professional development placement for a librarian from the Fiji School of Medicine
- in 2002 Bronia hosted a state government-sponsored apprentice while the apprentice completed the TAFE library assistant qualification. The disabled trainee now has regular work in the Townsville Health Library
- Bronia participated in the Evidence Based Clinical Practice workshop in Adelaide in 2002 and has since promoted evidence-based information gathering and research throughout Queensland.

People like Bronia Renison, who volunteer their spare time to help their colleagues maintain and develop their professional skills, are in my view the real heroes of our profession.

*Elizabeth Swan, Information Edge,
Sydney*