

# Library tech groups in WA and Tasmania

This month we profile two more ALIA library technician groups — from Western Australia and Tasmania.

## WALT – West Australian Library Technician Group

The WA Library Technician Section of the Library Association of Australia first formed in August 1979 with a committee of ten but disbanded in 1981 due to a lack of nominations for committee positions. The group reformed in 1984, so we turn 21 this year!

Group numbers have fluctuated over the years. As ALIA members are able to select a number of groups to belong to, some who join WALT are not resident in WA and some are not even library technicians. On the other hand, there are library technicians who are members of ALIA and resident in WA, but have not opted to join WALT. Certainly the numbers turning up to meetings has grown in recent times — always an encouraging sign.

The group has had some notable successes. In 1989 WALT achieved an occupational category (Library Technician) within the state's public sector and obtained Level 2 status for certain graduates within the public sector. In 1999 WALT organised the highly successful 10th National Library Technician Conference in Fremantle. Part of the profit from the conference has funded a Student Conference Grant, providing funding to assist a student or recent graduate to attend the National Library Technician Conference — an acknowledgement of the high cost of attending conferences for those resident here on the edge. The grant has now been awarded three times: to Mason Clark in 2001, Michaela Shepherdson in 2003, and Felicity Seeber in 2005.

WALT tries to arrange a mix of professional development and social activities. Social events are particularly popular, indicating that networking is very important to our members. In recent non-(library technician) conference years we have organised residential seminars. In 2002 the seminar was held in Bunbury in conjunction with SWeLL (South West Library Link). It was well attended by delegates (both professional and para-professional) from a wide range of libraries. In 2004 a smaller group travelled north to the Old Convent in the monastic town of New Norcia for a series of interesting workshops and socialising.

In 2004 Judy Clayden, joint co-ordinator of the Library Technician course at Edith Cowan University, ran an internet searching workshop that was so popular that she agreed to run it a second time. We hope to be able to run the same course again this year and are currently organising a workshop focusing on the career paths available for technicians. We are lucky to have an enthusiastic



TALIATec members in Hobart celebrating National Library Technician Day in May 2005

group of members willing to work together to provide these development opportunities for local library technicians.

*Judy Allan, convenor, WALT*

## TALIATecs

After a number of years of inactivity, the Tasmanian Library Technician Group, TALIATecs, reformed in 1995 when a small group of Tasmanian ALIA members decided that, as library technicians, we needed representation. Since then the group has gone from strength to strength.

The TALIATecs Group promotes library technician issues to all library and information workers and students in Tasmania with emphasis on membership and professional development activities. We aim to encourage new graduates by creating a network of experienced practitioners who can offer friendship and support for newly qualified library technicians.

The group offers support and events in three regional areas of Tasmania on a bi-monthly basis. Two meetings a year are held centrally within the state to allow members from all regions to participate.

TALIATecs showed how well we work together as a team when we successfully convened the 11th National Library Technician Conference in Hobart in August 2001. We also fund a grant for a library technician student to attend each national conference.

Our members have provided industry representation on the national 'Reframing the Future' strategy for TAFE, and have acted as industry representatives on consultative training boards.

The TALIATec Group provides an opportunity for library technicians from varied workplaces to meet, network, share ideas and learn from each other. Our aim is to represent the interest of library technicians on relevant issues, and promote membership of professional associations.

*Julia Goss, group treasurer, TALIATecs*



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