

Your voice

Escalating desire

I would like to share with colleagues a story about the wonderful library I visited recently. The IFLA World Library and Information Conference in Oslo in August provided the opportunity for library visits. I visited the magnificent new building of the Norwegian School of Management (http://www.bi.no/templates/ArticleColor___33884.aspx). The library is visually exciting, it is on floors 5 and 6 of a seven-storey building. The building has a huge central atrium through which you travel up the five floors on an escalator directly to the library — no stops on the way. In the words of Professor Øystein Fjeldstad, the Dean of Academic Programs, the escalator to the library is symbolic of their aim to imbue in their students 'an escalating desire for knowledge'.

Mary Anne Kennan, NSW

Librarians contracting through a recruitment agency

As a contracting librarian I would recommend to any information professional that you make sure you shop around to get the best deal from a recruitment agency. There are a number of agencies now operating in Canberra: we have a choice, so use it to your advantage.

Agencies seem to treat short-term contracts as 'casual' despite the fact that they are often not casual in the true sense, as clients, more often than not, request that you work regular fixed hours

per day/week for a fixed term. It's up to you as the contracting librarian to negotiate an hourly rate that is acceptable and that includes a 20 per cent leave loading in lieu of sick and recreation leave, if the contract is being treated as casual. Be mindful that the agency negotiates an hourly rate with the client and will take anything up to a 40 per cent share of the hourly rate you earn. This percentage includes their overheads/workers' compensation/superannuation plus a profit. Some agencies have bigger overheads and/or demand a bigger profit and therefore offer you less.

Ensure you are getting a fair share. Yes, the recruitment agency is offering a service to their clients, but should also be offering a service to you to get you the right job at the best hourly rate.

I highly recommend ALIA's Employment page (<http://alia.org.au/employment/>), especially 'Recommended minimum hourly rates for casual work' (<http://alia.org.au/employment/salary.scales/casual.html>), as a good place to start your homework. Good luck!

Joy Cocker, ACT

Your letters on any issue of relevance to the library and information sector are welcomed.

All letters should be addressed to the inCite editor and may be e-mailed to incite@alia.org.au, or faxed to 02 6282 2249, or posted to: Your voice, ALIA, PO Box 6335, Kingston 2604. Please include your name and postal address with your letter or e-mail.

Letters will be accepted for publication until the 18th of the month.

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