

# An exciting time for ALIA

Emma Royan-Smith, ALIA events manager

It's an exciting time for events at ALIA National Office, with an abundance of conferences, symposiums, workshops and seminars being held over the last six months, all aimed at informing, innovating and inspiring the library and information profession.

The ALIA 2004 Biennial conference, *Challenging ideas*, kicked off the season in September 2004 at the Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre. The conference attracted more than 800 delegates and exhibitor representatives from 86 trade exhibition booths.

Queensland Premier Peter Beattie and the Honourable Anna Bligh, Minister for Education and the Arts, officially opened the conference. Keynote speakers included Kay Raseroka, president of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) who made a passionate plea for us all to be aware of the importance of freedom of access to information, and Phillip Blackwell, chief executive officer of Black-

well Ltd UK, expressing his belief that e-books and print books will continue to thrive, side-by-side.

The *CarnivALIA!* conference dinner at Dreamworld was the highlight of the social program. Delegates rode the Tower of Terror, watched the magnificent Bengal tigers, and danced the night away to a Calypso band.

Conference convenor Janine Schmidt and her dedicated team of committee volunteers ensured that the conference was an outstanding success, and, if the handover at the close of conference to the WA committee was any indication, the ALIA 2006 conference in Perth is sure to be a not-to-be missed event on the 2006 calendar — especially if we can get Kerry Smith to dance again!

In December 2004, ALIA followed up with the New Librarians' Symposium 2 (NLS2) — an outstanding event for new graduates. The catchy theme of this two-day symposium, *Beyond the Stereotype*, provided plenty of scope for debate, as 276 delegates, including sponsor and exhibitor representatives, attended a stimulating program that featured experienced professionals, new librarians and first-time speakers.

Keynote speakers included Alan Smith, the director of the State Library of South Australia, who discussed career development for librarians. Jessamyn West, an outreach librarian at a rural public library in Vermont, USA and editor of the weblog, *librarian.net*, spoke on progressive, conservative, radical, and alternative forms of librarianship, and retail consultant John Stanley, looked at libraries as theatre and the role of librarian as an actor. Other program activities, including the resumé review service and life coaching sessions proved very popular.

Colourful cocktails and games at the conference cocktail party in the Mortlock Wing of the newly renovated State Library of South Australia were a great success, and delegates had loads of fun trying to guess what was in the box at the conference dinner to win prizes. Trade exhibitors commented on the wonderful 'buzz' of NLS2 and the enthusiasm of the delegates who attended. Huge congratulations to convenor Kate Sinclair and her conference organising committee for a fantastic conference. We cannot wait for NLS3 in Sydney, 2006!

ALIA's most recent conference, Information Online 2005, was held from 1–3 February at the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre, organised by ALIA's Information Online Group. Convenor Kay Harris, and her committee worked tirelessly to produce an enormously successful event that attracted more than 1000 delegates, including representatives from 122 trade exhibitor booths.

Keynote speakers included Peter Crowe, Head of Search, at Yahoo! who talked about the future of the search engine; Hemant Manohar, chief knowledge officer, KPMG India, discussed how India is rapidly emerging as the world's outsourcing hub of knowledge work; and Angela Abell, director of TFPL Ltd, explored the conclusions of two recent knowledge management focused projects in the United Kingdom.

The *Chasing the Sun* virtual reference service was simultaneously launched in Sydney and the United Kingdom during the conference. A collaborative project of the South Australian Health Libraries Consortium and the UK National Health Service libraries in the South West of England, *Chasing the Sun* is an after-business hours online reference service for urgent clinical questions relating to patient care.

The guest speaker at the conference dinner was Adam Spencer, former presenter of the Breakfast Show on ABC Radio Triple J. Adam's presentation had the audience in stitches as he discussed the sexiness of having a first-class honours degree in Pure Mathematics.

So what is in store for the rest of 2005? The ALIA National Library and Information Technicians Conference, *neXt 2005*, will be held at the Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre from 6 to 9 September 2005. Further information can be found at <http://conferences.alia.org.au/libtec2005/>. The Third International Evidence Based Librarianship Conference comes to Australia this year and will be held at the Holiday Inn, Brisbane from 16 to 19 October 2005. The theme for the conference is *Evolution of evidence: global perspectives on linking research with practice* and further details can be found at <http://conferences.alia.org.au/ebi2005/>. ■

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