

**Troy Watson, Library Manager,  
Emergency Management Australia**

The phrase 'Our library is a disaster!' is not uncommon, but for those of us working in emergency management libraries, it has a somewhat different meaning! Australasian Libraries In the Emergency Sector (ALIES) is a co-operative information network which aims to increase the information capacity of emergency management agencies. Dealing with disasters is part of our daily business!

The ALIES network was formed in 1991, and now includes 37 member organisations from Australia and New Zealand. Members might be known as librarians, knowledge managers, or information specialists, but our common aim is to promote the professional status of emergency management agency libraries and information services. ALIES works as a community of

practice, as well as a mechanism for contributing to wider policy issues. An ALIES charter provides a formal framework for future direction of the network, and an Executive Committee of elected members is responsible for managing the affairs of the network.

To be a member of ALIES, a library's parent organisation must be involved in at least one of the four stages of emergency management – Prevention/Mitigation, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery. Member libraries come from police, fire and ambulance services, state and federal government departments (including Geoscience Australia and the Bureau of Meteorology), and non-government organisations such as Australian Red Cross. The subject areas we cover include emergency management, security, environment, science, health, law, and forensics. Membership has grown in recent years as we realise that more libraries have a role to play in a whole-of-government approach to emergency management.

ALIES libraries face many issues common to the special library sector. Our libraries vary from multi-branch government libraries to small one-person libraries. Downsizing, organisational restructure, changes in management and budget cuts are factors that ALIES libraries deal

with on a regular basis. Marketing the library is important, both within our organisations and externally, as is changing services to meet the demands of users. ALIES libraries are particularly focused on targeted information services, online delivery of services, and delivery of services over distance, training and e-learning.

ALIES has developed a number of tools to facilitate resource-sharing. These include ALIESnet, a gratis Document Delivery network which includes the journal holdings of ALIES members; the ALIES listserv to communicate with members; an online secure 'Quickplace' for sharing information and managing knowledge; and consortia arrangements for a range of online databases.

The ALIES workshops, held annually since 2002, are a highly valued experience for ALIES librarians. Each workshop has provided a forum for library professionals to engage with their colleagues and discuss ideas that ultimately benefit the emergency management sector. Held at the Emergency Management Australia Institute in Mount Macedon, Victoria, the workshops have been made possible through sponsorship from Emergency Management Australia, which is a division of the Attorney-General's Department.

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*Participants at the ALIES 2007 workshop*



## Welcome to Melbourne!

### Host City: ALIA National Library & Information Technicians Conference 2007

Melbourne has a national and international reputation as the garden and cultural city of Australia, a place of business vitality, outstanding restaurants and enviable sporting events. As a location for the conference, Melbourne has many advantages, including state of the art convention facilities, quality and affordable accommodation and an excellent transport system.

The conference will be held in springtime, 9–12 October, so you can enjoy our many beautiful gardens in full bloom. Melbourne's October daytime temperature averages 20 degrees, but the city has been known to experience all 4 seasons in the one day, so pack accordingly! The conference venue is the Grand Hyatt Melbourne, located at the top end of Collins Street. We will party long into the night at the conference dinner, at the fabulous Melbourne Aquarium. Take the virtual tour at <http://www.melbourneaquarium.com.au/>.

A highlight of past conferences has been library and related site visits. This year we are introducing themed tours, providing a behind-

the-scenes look at the work in a field of expertise or type of library.

On Tuesday 9 October, delegates will have the opportunity to visit a range of city and suburban libraries including academic, special (medical, legal, etc.), public, school, archives and some with a community learning focus. Attendees will be able to view rare collections, and hear about the latest innovations, initiatives, trends, practices and workflows that may have practical application for their own work.

We will also include tours of general interest covering a variety of sites. A heritage trail will explore Melbourne's oldest libraries, and we will also visit a couple of Melbourne's newest. Library sites include the State Library of Victoria, the University of Melbourne, the Athenaeum library, Kay Craddock Antiquarian Bookseller, Blake Dawson, the Royal Automobile Club of Victoria (RACV), the Supreme Court, The Age, Yarra Plenty Regional, Hume Global Learning Village, Red Cross National Archives and the National Herbarium of Victoria.

Each tour will be led by an experienced library worker, assisted by a library technician student. LT student volunteers will help the conference organising committee during the formal conference program. (We will soon release a call for expressions of interest from students currently enrolled in courses at local teaching institutions.)

The Conference committee has been busy preparing a solid program around the themes of Inform, Innovate, Initiate and Inspire. Keep checking the website for updates (<http://www.alia07.com>), and look for our snippets on ALIA e-lists and in *inCite*.

If you have any questions please contact any of the Committee members listed on the web site – I can guarantee you a most cordial reception!

**Bradley O'Brien  
Melbourne Ambassador  
ALIA 2007 National Library and  
Information Technicians  
Conference**