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It was a pleasure to attend the ALIA Biennial Conference in Alice Springs during the first week in September. I met ALIA members from across the library and information sector and returned to the National Office with a good overview of the issues which are of most concern to the library workforce.

## Professional development (PD)

ALIA's National Advisory Congress met before the Conference. A major issue raised was that of entitlements to leave and financial assistance for professional development. The Workwatch column published in the May 2008 issue of *inCite* focused on PD and can be viewed at [www.alia.org.au/publishing/incite/2008](http://www.alia.org.au/publishing/incite/2008). ALIA's ongoing advice to library workers pursuing PD opportunities would be, firstly, to raise the issue with workplace supervisors, especially where an employee has identified a PD program of particular relevance to the employee's current work. More generally, employees should

approach human resources departments to check as to an employer's policies with regard to granting leave and paying for PD.

The question of PD should also be raised where an individual contract or collective agreement is being negotiated. This is where unions are of assistance in advising as to appropriate entitlements and establishment of policies covering a workplace. The common requirement that employees undergo an annual performance review carries the implication that staff are expected to remain abreast of developments in a fast-changing world. It is therefore a reasonable expectation that employers will, within their means, facilitate a level of PD that will enable staff to remain up to date with developments within their profession.

For further information as to PD opportunities organised and promoted by ALIA, members should refer to [www.alia.org.au/education/pd](http://www.alia.org.au/education/pd)

## Changes to university sector industrial regulations

Recent Federal legislation will have some bearing on the current round of enterprise bargaining occurring in many higher education institutions. In August, the Higher Education Workplace Relations Requirements which predated the 2006 WorkChoices legislation were revoked breaking the nexus between higher education funding and the requirement that institutions offer staff Australian Workplace Agreements (AWAs). Although AWAs could not be offered in the wider Australian workplace after March of this year, ongoing provisions within the Higher Education Support Act meant that universities had been in an anomalous position with regard to AWAs.

## Salary updates

ALIA remains in contact with state and territory education authorities and the Australian Education Union concerning increases to salaries covering teacher librarians. In Western Australia, the most recent pay rise offered by the former Labor Government was rejected by teachers in mid-September. The State School Teachers' Union of WA is now negotiating with the new Minister for Education concerning an improved pay offer and other conditions. Any outcomes from these negotiations will be noted on the ALIA employment pages. In the Northern Territory a revised offer was made to teachers in early September and is also subject to negotiation.

For salaries recommended for the library workforce generally, there is still no outcome to the NSW Crown Employees 2008 wage case which is the basis of ALIA's salary recommendations. The latest advice is that hearings have begun before the NSW Industrial Relations Commission but a determination is not expected until during October. Salary levels continue to be those granted by the 2007 wage case.

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