

## Engaging with the LIS community

The themes of Inform, Innovate, Initiate and Inspire were all aptly met at last year's ALIA National Library & Information Technicians Conference. Non traditional exhibitions and concepts, new and exciting relaxation activities, trade exhibitors, free satellite events and workshops supplemented the formal academic program.

The ALIA Library Technician Educators' Forum was held at RMIT University Library prior to the conference. Attendees from TAFEs around Australia took part in discussions, facilitated by Professor Gill Hallam from Queensland University of Technology and Dr Paul Genoni from Curtin University. Currently sixteen TAFE locations and one private provider offer library technician courses and the forum gave educators the opportunity to air their concerns about educational issues, with input feeding directly into the ALIA Education and Workforce Summit 2008 to be held in Melbourne on 28 March.

Conference delegates had the option of participating in fifteen different tours, all varying in duration and departing from the State Library of Victoria. Libraries were selected because of their unique collections, history, innovations or their renown as best practice sites. Due to the enthusiastic participation of the venues, volunteer guides, willing staff at the State Library of Victoria, and the delegates themselves, the tours were a great success.

Anne Beaumont from the State Library of Victoria opened the conference with a keynote address, focusing on the massive changes she has observed since qualifying in the 1960s and the necessity for LIS workers to focus on user needs. She discussed the need to play with blogs, wikis and emerging technologies in order to connect with others. There were many thought provoking and stimulating presentations over the following days, with a focus on choice for users and a conscious shift from the traditional and trusted library programs of the past.

Retail consultant Kevin Henna spoke passionately on 'making over' physical spaces, attracting new customers and engaging with existing users. A popular speaker, Kevin stressed that there are many things libraries can do to market themselves, such as branding – using visible, clear, external signage, maximisation of space and strategic placement of displays.

Friday afternoon involved the presenting of awards with closing remarks from the conference convenor, from ALIA Vice-President Derek Whitehead, and a presentation from the SA organising committee for the next ALIA National Library & Information Technicians Conference 'Technology Technique Unique Adelaide 09'.

Thanks go to the hard working organising committee for a splendid and successful conference. Valuable and positive feedback from speakers and delegates about the depth, variety and value of presentations has been received.

I wish Dunn and Wilson study grant recipient, Rebecca Evans, every success for her project *Preserving our past to educate our future* which aims to identify, collate and catalogue photographs and other information about

library technicians and the sector into an image database. Congratulations also to our ALIA Library Technician of the Year for 2007, Jennifer Dyer, who has made an outstanding contribution to library technicians in schools, in NSW and nationally. An energetic and inspirational person, Jennifer truly deserves her reward and recognition.

Conference photos are available on Flickr and the papers are accessible via the ALIA website <http://www.alia.org.au/conferences/nlitc.2007.html>

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L to R Conference Convenor Gail Schmidt, State Library of Victoria; Greg Honeyman, Manager Marketing and Public Affairs, State Library of Victoria; Roxanne Missingham, ALIA President and Parliamentary Librarian, ACT

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