

Frontline



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Feedback to your Board of Directors

Board members welcome your comments and feedback. Please feel free to contact a Board member at any time.

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By the time you read this LIW will be well and truly done and dusted. Those of you who invested time and energy in the week will probably have had the equivalent of a bex and a lie down and will now be on to bigger and better (or maybe just different) things.

Like many across the country we here in Rockhampton celebrated the week. On the Tuesday night a group of interested librarians got together to present and reflect on what some of our libraries have achieved over the past 12 months. It's quite amazing to see the diversity in libraries we have in a relatively isolated region of Australia with just over 100 000 people. We had presentations from four different types of libraries – special, school, public, and academic. And guess what their main theme was? You guessed it – access! All provided tailored access to their diverse range of clients – medical students, school students and staff, the general public, and university students. Innovation, flexibility, and a desire to constantly improve services and resources underpinned each presentation. For NSS, Ann-Marie from the Rockhampton Regional Council Library even arranged for the members of the Rockhampton Rockets, the local Queensland Basketball League team, to be involved with the reading of *Little White Dogs Can't Jump*.

My own library at CQUniversity got into the swing of things with training sessions, tours of the library, and even a presidential lunch. Members of the senior executive were invited, and those who attended were impressed by the achievements of the library, but even more by the quality of the food provided by library staff, as were the students who got the leftovers!

I'm sure the events I've described were played out all over the country. It's an important week to celebrate our achievements with our clients, and to lobby our stakeholders and purse-string holders, and advocate for those things important to our libraries.

Access is obviously important as an underlying principle and driver for libraries and their clients. It's equally important to ALIA as access underpins a number of the Association's objectives, such as the free flow of information. On one hand we are lobbying the government to reconsider its stance on internet filtering, and on the other we are promoting responsible use of information by promoting cybersafety. Equally, ALIA's representation to the House of Representatives Inquiry into School Libraries and Teacher Librarians in Australian Schools is about ensuring the nation's school students have access to resources and trained staff to enable them to become informed citizens.

While I'm on access I shouldn't neglect to plug the 2010 ALIA Access Conference in Brisbane 1-3 September. It's shaping up to be a great conference with a rich and diverse program. Check the ALIA website for more details.

A number of (make that many) years ago I attended a QUESTnet conference at Yeppoon. (Nowhere near the jetty, Jan!) One of the keynote speakers was from IBM and he was speaking about standards. His opening sentence was something along the lines of,

"One of the great thing about standards is that everybody can have one!" He was referring to standards in the IT world, especially networking. But if you look around you nearly everything we use or experience has standards attached or involved in some form or another. Libraries are no exception.

Last week Elke from our library gave an excellent presentation to some of the university's IT staff on our library systems and applications and how they all fitted together. Her presentation covered everything from AACR2 to FRBR to OAL_PMH to some ISO and NISO standards that all seemed to end in point (.) something. Of course they are all important to ensure uniformity, conformance, and compliance, and ultimately to ensure we, and our clients, can search, locate, and retrieve information. It goes beyond that though; most libraries now have service standards, and there are the ANZIL standards for information literacy.

ALIA has a role to play in ensuring and endorsing standards. One of the fundamental roles of ALIA is ensuring the standards of courses and programs educating library and information workers are appropriate. The comprehensive State of the Nation report examines the state of play with library technician education and training and makes important recommendations. Equally course/program recognition (accreditation from July 1) visits to universities training and educating librarians is essential to ensure we have appropriately credentialed graduates. In the 2008 member survey the recognition of courses and programs rated quite highly so it's obviously an important role ALIA plays. It's also a role members and non-members benefit from equally and is undertaken at no charge to the institutions.

ALIA is also involved in developing standards for libraries. The Special Libraries Advisory Committee recently recommended standards for special libraries, and ALIA has commissioned Libraries Alive! to document standards for public libraries. ALIA has also worked with ASLA to develop standards for school libraries. While ALIA is involved in the development, it's actually up to members and organisations to ensure the standards are met and to rectify the situation if they aren't.

As I write about standards my mind wanders back to my first job as a librarian, coding data sheets to transfer the contents of a card catalogue to the then new technology of microfiche. My boss at the time was Gordon. He knew his AACR (yes this was days before the second edition) and he had encyclopaedic knowledge of AUSMARC. Gordon was a precise fellow and took a particularly considered approach when deliberating over a weighty cataloguing dilemma. Not only did he give me my first job, but he also taught me the practical importance of having high standards in all areas of a library. Unfortunately, Gordon passed away this week. Here's to you, Gordo!

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