

## ALIA Study Grant helps Sydney libraries plan future music collections

In 2008 I was fortunate to be the recipient of the ALIA 2008 Study Grant Award which gave me the opportunity to travel overseas and visit libraries in Sweden (Stockholm and Gavle), Switzerland (Basel) and the UK (London, Gateshead and various other British Libraries) and then on to New York and Chicago.

My aim was to investigate the feasibility of setting up a free public music library for the City of Sydney, by researching and then observing best practice first hand and interacting with professional colleagues, mainly those I had met when attending the International Association of Music Libraries, Archives and Documentation Centres (IAML) Conference in Sydney in 2007. The organisation currently has about 2,000 individual and institutional members in some 45 countries throughout the world.

Founded in 1951 to promote international cooperation and to support the interests of the profession, IAML is a respected member of the international library and music communities. It has national branches in 22 countries, five professional branches, four subject commissions and various working groups, and is responsible for several large-scale documentation projects. The membership comprises major music collections, music and audio-visual librarians, music archivists and documentation specialists, musicologists, music publishers and dealers and so covers a wide range of expertise.

So it was at this conference, as a result of this face to face professional interaction, that my dream of being able to 'marry' my two great loves, public libraries and music, was born. I became acutely aware how common it was for the major cities all over the world to have a public music library and how much they were contributing to the culture and musical life of their respective countries.

During the conference I was able to show some of the delegates (from Sweden, Switzerland, the UK and South Africa,) our City of Sydney Library Service, in particular our Custom's House branch and my branch at Glebe. I also spent many pleasant social hours with them, where we discussed many exciting professional initiatives which gave me even more inspiration.

Having been involved in ALIA for over forty years and being a great believer in the value of networking with other colleagues, the chance to widen my sphere of communication by joining IAML was too good an opportunity to miss. I kept in touch by email and Facebook with the particular contacts I had made, as we had become friends as well as colleagues. This made it very easy for me to plan my itinerary for my research and to be made to feel so welcome when I visited these same colleagues and their libraries. Their amazing hospitality and willingness to share their professional knowledge with me can never be overestimated.

I visited as many different types of music libraries as I could, as I wanted to compare the more traditional music library services with the current trends overseas of attaching a public music library to a performance complex such as in Gavle and Gateshead.

I also explored the latest developments in, and use of, technology eg. digitisation which is now providing access to library collections on a global scale, on-line reference resources, downloading and streaming, podcasts, software and hardware that can turn a PC into a recording studio.

As a result of my experiences I have been asked by the Library Manager to prepare a report for future music provision for the City of Sydney Library Service, embracing new technological developments and the digital age (such as is happening at ExploreMusic in Gateshead) and looking at what hard copy resources we still need to collect such as scores and CDs.

Professional associations such as ALIA and IAML have been invaluable to me as through these associations I have

been able to meet and subsequently network with colleagues from all over the world. I am a strong believer in face to face professional communication and interaction. Conferences, workshops and meetings provide this interaction. Through their publications, internet sites and electronic communication they make it so much easier to keep up with international trends and developments. I particularly depend on electronic databases for journal and newspaper articles, websites and newsfeeds and regularly communicate via email with colleagues and organisations. Face-book and Linked-in are invaluable tools, however I am yet to embark on other Web 2.0 (or 3.0?) provision such as Twitter, mainly owing to time restraints.

Travelling has been a wonderful way to widen my professional outlook. I have seen so many amazing libraries and met so many committed librarians with a passion for their work, which has been totally inspirational. I have also realised that basically we are all convinced of our worth by looking towards embracing change and keeping libraries and librarians in the forefront of the information and educational, recreational and cultural life of our respective countries.

My full report submitted to ALIA earlier this year gives a detailed account of my findings. My adventures are also recorded on my blog: <http://muslibproject.blogspot.com/>

**Margaret Whittaker**

Glebe Library Team Leader

[mwhittaker@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au](mailto:mwhittaker@cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au)

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<http://www.alia.org.au/awards/study.grant/>

## Supporting new professionals in memory of Bob McKee

Readers may remember reading of the passing of Bob McKee at the IFLA conference. Now, the International Association of Library Associations (IFLA) and the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP), with the support of Bob's family, have launched the Aspire Award in his memory. Bob McKee was Chief Executive of CILIP, the leading professional body for the library and information sector in the UK, and is warmly remembered for his support and encouragement of new professionals. The Aspire Award will provide bursaries for new professionals to attend CILIP and IFLA conferences. In the first year, this will include support for a new professional from the Ukraine, a country in which Bob had a special interest. After two years, the international bursary will be available to the whole library community. It is hoped that the bursary will be funded by donations, which can be made either through CILIP or IFLA.

The Aspire Award was officially launched on October 28, which would have been the day of Bob's official retirement party in the UK. For more information: Ingeborg Verheul, Communications and Services Director, IFLA, email [ingeborg.verheul@ifla.org](mailto:ingeborg.verheul@ifla.org).