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AURORA INSTITUTE FOR EMERGING LEADERS 2013

Monday 27 May 2013 – Friday 31 May 2013

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

In my experience, librarians are actually able to act as prescribed witnesses for important documents. It is just that they are concealed in the generic category of 'senior public servant'. Some years ago, as a librarian, I received a circular from my employer (TAFE Tasmania) reminding us that staff were empowered to act as prescribed witnesses if asked to do so.

Since retirement I have moved to a city where I knew few people, so when I needed things witnessed I automatically headed to my public library. Librarians were happy to oblige and I have never had my choice of witness questioned.

If the situation is the same in other states, we don't need the change Vanessa advocates (Jan/Feb 2013) – just a little more publicity for another way librarians can help people.

Helen Dunford
(Retired librarian)
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Dear Editor,

I refer to Janette Wright's *Opinion* piece in the November 2012 (Volume 33 Issue 11) issue of INCITE, and to Mary Cain's well-reasoned response in the January/February issue.

Regarding the issue of pay equity, I draw the attention of both writers to the gender-based pay equity case run on behalf of librarians, by the NSW Public Service Association, in 2001–2002.

The case, which included a preliminary work value comparison between librarians (as a predominantly female profession) and geologists (as a predominantly male profession), was decided in 2002, and resulted in a new Award for librarians, library technicians, and archivists in the NSW public sector.

The case in all its complexity, was admirably described by Kate Burnham, who was one of the prime movers, in the Australian Library Journal in 2004. The article can be read online at www.alia.org.au/publishing/alj/53.4/full_text/burnham.html

However, discrimination takes many forms, and ten years on, equal pay cannot alleviate the stress of job insecurity, as the public and private sectors decide that they can do without libraries and librarians.

As Mary says, it is a continuing political battle, and it is fought on a daily basis in all the different kinds of workplaces where librarians are to be found.

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