

GO GLOBAL

The International Librarians Network (ILN) aims to help information professionals develop professional networks on a global scale. This March, a new round of applicants will be invited to join.

The ILN is the brainchild of three young Australians from the University of New South Wales—Kate Byrne, Clare McKenzie and ALIA Director Alyson Dalby—and now stretches across 40 countries with 392 participants.

As an independent facilitated peer-mentoring program, the ILN provides a wonderful opportunity to spread your own professional network beyond country boundaries. The program is free to join and is open to anyone working in the library and information industry, across the globe.

Many of us within the profession would love the opportunity to travel and visit other libraries, to meet others in the field to share information and to learn from each other. But it's not always possible to travel overseas because of our work commitments or financial challenges.

You can connect with other professionals through social media avenues such as Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook but sometimes it can be daunting to know where to start, how to connect with others and how to network on a global basis. While online forums,

online conferences and webinars are excellent places for sharing and learning new ideas and innovative approaches, another excellent alternative is to develop a peer-to-peer connection through a facilitated arrangement such as the ILN.

The program coordinators endeavour to connect each participant with someone who has similar interests based on the information provided in the application process, and lead the program by providing discussion points as prompts for the sharing of information and the development of conversation. These don't have to be strictly adhered to; they are good starting points to get the ball rolling and maintain the connection. The program is also being constantly evaluated to ensure that the participants are supported as much as possible and to make it a positive experience.

Participants do need access to the internet and should be prepared to set aside about an hour or so each week to develop the professional connection. Information about the application process, details about the program and links to resources to expand and internationalise your professional network are available from the ILN website at www.ilnetwork.wordpress.com.

Please consider participating in the ILN. It's your opportunity to gain a better understanding of both the similarities and differences between library settings; discover innovative approaches that can be adapted within your own library environment and also an opportunity for united advocacy on a number of issues that affect us all. Most of all, you will get to meet some inspiring and remarkable librarians and widen your international network.

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