



ALIA GROUP ROUNDUP: VICSPECIALS

The ALIA Special Libraries Group of Victoria (VicSpecials) has got to be one of the most special ALIA groups around. Well, I would argue that we probably have the most fun – we get to eat cake, tour around to see some incredible compendia, and sometimes have committee meetings at the pub. It doesn't get much better than that.

Melbourne is well-endowed with an impressive list of special libraries all around the CBD and metropolitan area. VicSpecials enables these librarians to support each other as a group, both online and at events.

The group has been running for a long time. Initially, our purpose was to support the little, small-staffed libraries with a group of their own and give them a voice and a forum to be and to belong. The VicSpecials has not been exclusive to ALIA Members, and has reached a broad range of people as a result. Together, these people helped shape the VicSpecials. Today, we network primarily via elist (about 200 strong) and also via Facebook and regular events.

Each year, we coordinate a couple of social events and a few local library visits. We would also like to host an annual professional development opportunity, a seminar or panel. Our events mainly consist of a short special library tour with a brief presentation and a showcase of some special materials. Recent tours include the likes of the ABC Library, Museum Victoria Library, Supreme Court of Victoria Library, and the Bureau of Meteorology Library. Some of our favourite Christmas events have been dinner at the Melbourne Cricket Club (MCC) Library, and the Royal Automobile Club of Victoria (RACV) Library (as in special libraries, also in sports teams and restaurants: Melbourne has a little something for everyone).

The VicSpecials embrace a special bunch of librarians and library-folk, some with widely diverse, yet all-encompassing roles in managing very special collections. VicSpecials enjoy all things librarian and special and we like to celebrate each other's work, share our challenges, and admire each other's collections. Our specials come from a variety of sectors across our industry including corporate, law, architectural, museum, research, records and archives, government, non-profit, media, and tertiary librarians too.

About 10 years ago the VicSpecials joined the International Edible Book Festival lovers (on or about April 1) and launched this event locally. It continues to be a delicious



Left to right: VicSpecials Committee members Cathie Gillam, Shirley Wong, Caroline Edge, Edda Williams, Alison Foster.

success year upon year. The VicSpecials published an informative quarterly newsletter from 1992–2011, containing information about recent events and people's movements in the sector, along with paid advertising from our local sponsors. In recent years, we've lacked the volunteers to maintain the newsletter, yet we continue to receive generous sponsorship and support from companies including The One Umbrella, ColInfo, ProQuest, Civica, the Melbourne Athenaeum, and the Book Cover Co. (Thank you!)

We are also great supporters of collaboration and have recently organised joint events with ALIA VIC and ALIA Reference and Information Services (RAIS). All of this happens thanks to a small but effective, efficient and brilliant committee. In my sixth year of service, I can wholeheartedly thank the rest of our modest committee: Deborah Schraeder, Cathie Gilliam, Caroline Edge, Shirley Wong, Sue Massey and Edda Williams. (Thank you!)

The VicSpecials is open for networking for people working in, or with an interest in, special libraries and related fields. As an ALIA Group, no official registration or initiation is required. We're always looking for volunteers to support us on the committee so we can do more to serve the special libraries in Victoria. I'd like to see more special librarians in the area join us.

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ALIA VicSpecials Convenor

Special, *spesh'l*, adj.

Different from what is normal or usual; *especially* : unusual in a good way; especially important or loved; designed for a particular purpose or occasion.



Want to know more about VicSpecials?

- www.alia.org.au/elists/aliavicspecials
- www.facebook.com/VicSpecials