

DIY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

You might be new to the LIS profession, but that doesn't mean you have to feel alone. Library newbies got together in Canberra at NLS8 – New Librarians' Symposium 8 – on 23–25 June. As **AMY WALDUCK** and **SALLY TURBITT** report, helping to organise NLS8 has been a huge career boost.

What was the biggest professional development challenge you have taken on recently? Study, a MOOC or a secondment? For us, we have been on the most intense PD journey of our careers as the co-convenors of the 8th ALIA New Librarians' Symposium – NSL8 (nsl8.com). Our two-year development journey climaxed in June this year when hundreds of students and newly graduated librarians arrived at the symposium to be held at the National Library of Australia in Canberra.

Making the decision to volunteer and be part of organising a large, three-day event for LIS students and new graduates presented us with many challenges, not the least of which was the fact that team members were located in three Australian states. The theme for NLS8 was DIY Library Career, and as co-convenors we embraced the do-it-yourself attitude through a roller-coaster ride of learning.



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While the team spent time researching, setting up and using digital collaboration tools (hello Slack and Trello), developing new skills in marketing, graphic design and project management, we discovered early on that we needed to spend time sharing ideas on how to utilise the strengths in our team and find ways for everyone to build their skills. We learned from each other and gained confidence in trying new things. Some of our resources came from unexpected places (bakadesuyo.com and markmanson.net) as well as GLAMR blogs, LinkedIn, Twitter and our colleagues. Co-convening gave us the opportunity to learn together, which required honesty, candour and a large amount of humour, which in turn has made us better team leaders, volunteers, co-workers and members of the GLAMR community.

What did we learn in our time with the NLS8 team? That volunteering for a leadership role with ALIA is one of the best career development decisions we ever made. We took advantage of every opportunity that presented itself and used this experience as a springboard for our careers. By talking to people online and face-to-face about NLS8 and being visible in the GLAMR community, we discovered groups to get involved in – Picture Book Book Club (picturebookbc.wordpress.com) and newCardigan Blog Club (newcardigan.org) – and challenged each other to submit abstracts, write articles (like this one), network and find ways to use our new skills. The last two years weren't easy; they were, in fact, extremely busy, challenging and sometimes stressful, but you get back what you put in. We chose to work hard and push the boundaries – of ourselves, our team and the symposium – as we knew we were creating something wonderful.

We encourage you to get involved. Whether your commitment is big or small, you will benefit professionally – whatever your level of participation. And, if you're interested, there are new friends to be made too! It was great to see so many of you at NLS8, and we recommend that you join an ALIA group or a conference committee if you want to expand your career. 

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