



ALIA'S NEW MENTORING PROGRAM HAS BEEN 'PRICELESS'

The ALIA Mentoring Scheme's first group of 19 pairings has just finished the program. **KATE BUNKER** reports back on what the mentors, mentees, and ALIA learnt through the process.

The ALIA Mentoring Scheme was launched a year ago with our first intake of 38 participants – 19 mentors and 19 mentees. The mentors came from all over Australia as well as from Hong Kong. There was a wealth of professional expertise from mentors working in special, academic, public, national, and school libraries as well as some keen retirees seeking to give back to the profession. Mentees also came from all around Australia and not just the capital cities. They were predominantly, but not exclusively, LIS students or new graduates.

“As a mentee, the ALIA Mentoring Scheme has been absolutely priceless. My mentor helped me to shape my career direction and plan for the future, as well as helping me make the best of my new employment and make a positive mark on the industry and on my workplace. ALIA mentee

The Learning team at ALIA House supported the group in a variety of ways including a planning workbook, guidelines, wikis, planning templates and the *ALIA Career Development Kit*. We also planned and facilitated a monthly webinar that covered a variety of topics.

Through these webinars, we introduced a range of fascinating and learned guest speakers from around the world. For example, in our International careers webinar we heard from Kim Tairi and Damian Lodge from NZ; Fiona Bradley, Philip Kent and Anne Horn from the UK; Helen Mandl from IFLA in the Netherlands; and Andrew Finegan, who talked about volunteering in Papua New Guinea, Vietnam, and Kosovo. The webinars were recorded and these were watched by many after the event.

“I would recommend it because it contributes to your own PD substantially and, as in my personal case, you potentially gain relevant and rewarding resources and connections through your mentor. It allows you to engage professionally in other than your own workplace, if working, as well as discuss work issues freely. ALIA mentee

The aim of the webinars was to introduce a range of topics, ideas, viewpoints and perspectives that could be used in further conversations between the mentors and mentees. Some pairs watched the webinars as the basis for a monthly chat. By far the majority of mentoring pairs communicated online and we tried to facilitate meetups around International Mentoring Day in January 2018. These proved invaluable as an opportunity to network and meet others in the program, and to share insights and journeys.

After they completed the program, we surveyed the intake and all respondents indicated that they would recommend the ALIA Mentoring Scheme to both potential mentors and mentees. We know that participants value the resources such as the planning work and webinars, but didn't find the wiki terribly helpful, so we'll be making changes to activities for subsequent intakes. We may also vary the timing of the webinar as although sessions are recorded, people like to participate in the live chat.

“For mentees, I think the ALIA Mentoring Scheme provides a supportive, confidential environment in which to discuss the mentees goals and areas in which they would like to develop. This is an excellent initiative provided by ALIA which supports the growth and development of our future, and current library profession. ALIA mentor

We have a second intake that started in February 2019 with 16 mentoring pairs, and our third intake started in late July with 12 pairs. We have even had a mentee become a mentor in a subsequent intake, and we hope that many more will follow, as we all have something to give back to the profession. 