



2013 ALIA National Advisory Congress

Darwin, 5 October 2013

Attendance

Chair: Elke Dawson

Facilitator: Sue McKerrecher

Minute Taker: Jayshree Mamtora

Attendance: 16 members + 3 ALIA staff

Welcome and introduction video

Elke welcomed members to the meeting and explained the background to the Future of the Profession Project. Showed video.

The Future of the Profession project

Elke summarised the ALIA Futures Project, and the *Future of the Profession* document, noting its three themes:

1. Convergence
2. Collaboration
3. Golden Age of Information

Discussion

Sue facilitated the discussion.

Question 1: What do you see?

- In relation to the themes, convergence is required but it needs to be recognised that in some areas, we need to establish a point of need and embed niche services, e.g. academic librarians are being embedded in classes. Need to understand the business of the client and respond accordingly, e.g. IT and Research Staff understand client needs' well.
- Librarians need to collaborate with other groups more – they already understand the local needs of the clientele, but need to think strategically and embed their work with the activities and objectives of their organisation
- We are an informationalised society
- ALIA tends to neglect the "I" in ALIA, and focus on librarians only – there are non-librarians passionate about library work

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- We need special qualifications, experience alone is not always enough
- There exists a dichotomy between encouragement of ongoing learning (the ALIA PD Scheme) and lack of recognition by employers of the Scheme
- ALIA PD Scheme now allows specialisation, e.g. Certified Professional (Health)
- Need to address gender and age issue – there is a lack of men and young people in the profession – need to attract the young to the profession; need to work with school careers’ officers and see school kids working in libraries; and need more young boys in libraries.
- Everybody knows the sports master in their school but do they know the librarian?
- Image needs to be seen as being “cool” – we need groovy professionals that the young could identify with
- We need to be seen as experts, e.g. specialisations – research data
- In the NT, some libraries “grow their own” staff through work experience
- A digital divide exists with lack of access to resources
- Disconnect between qualifications and experience
- Disconnect between ALIA and ASLA – ASLA’s interest lies with teacher-librarians who are considered ‘professional’ because of their teaching certificate
- LIS profession prepares you well for other careers so we need to be library and information professionals without necessarily working in libraries and vice versa. A related issue of librarianship as a second or third career

Trend/Issue	Impact	Likelihood	Opportunity	Challenge
Better understand the business of the client	High	High	Yes	Yes
Requirement of special qualifications and ongoing learning	High	High	Yes	Yes
Lack of men and young people in the profession	High	High/Medium	Yes	Yes
Need an image makeover	High	High/Medium	Yes	Yes
Recognition of our expertise	High	High/Medium	Yes	Yes





Recognition of LIS qualifications by related fields	High	High/Medium	Yes	Yes
Digital divide	High	High	Yes	Yes
Disconnect between ALIA and ASLA	High	High/Medium	Yes	Yes

Question 2: How should we respond?

- Develop a set of core skills for our profession, which are reflected in LIS qualifications
- Ensure everyone recognises the skill sets, and develop popular cultural stereotypes so as to create an identity for our profession
- Partner with other key professional bodies e.g. Australian Industry Group, and with others in key areas such as GIS, big dataanalysis, culturalists
- Work on developing a respect for the profession, starting in schools
- Define the “I” in ALIA as information is our core business
- Come up with an umbrella term for the profession to embrace the varied information roles: archives, knowledge management, librarian, library technician, records management, for example “data professional” and move away from “librarian”
- Promote a career in information – the third theme, “Golden age of information” sounds old-fashioned; also find out why people are not going into librarianship as a career
- Put together a structured campaign and advocate during careers’ weeks
- Queensland review?
- Introduce the concept of “guerrilla” librarianship where you embed activities within your organisation creating libraries without walls
- Publish in peer-reviewed journals

Trend/issue	Individuals	Institutions	ALIA	Other Stakeholders
Develop a core set of skills	Yes	Yes	Yes	Training providers
Develop an umbrella term for the profession	Yes	Yes	Yes	Training providers
Define the “I” in ALIA	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Partner with key		Yes	Yes	





professions				
Develop career campaign and target school career programs			Yes	Yes
Encourage "guerrilla librarianship"	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Publish/encourage publishing in peer reviewed journals	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

What would be the most useful format of the final report?

- Wordle poster
- Video
- Report
- 'CPA-type' stories
- One page
- Incorporate killer stats – "story for the head, stats for the heart"
- Combination of the above

