

Library Technicians ... a profile



In this issue of *InCite* we start a series of profiles of library technician members — why they became technicians, the challenges, the work ... why they choose to belong to the LAA. The very first contribution is from Christine Cresswell, one of the dynamic group of WA technicians I met during my visit in March to open the WA local office.

Alan Bundy

Certificate of Library Practice

I worked as a library aide for six years before I enrolled in the Certificate of Library Practice at Perth Technical College, which I completed in 1983. I did this because I became bored with my work as a library aide and was encouraged by my librarian; the degree course for librarianship would have taken too long to complete part time (I did not envisage at that time staying in the workforce for a long period); I was told that library assistant positions would be available to those people with the certificate, which at that time meant access to a higher salary range than that of a library aide; my library aide position in TAFE was only temporary and I saw my certificate as a means of obtaining a permanent post.

I am presently employed as a library assistant at Thornlie College of TAFE which has a staffing structure of: librarian, library assistant, two library aides and a production officer. The library is the first TAFE college in WA to have installed the MICMARC Library Automation package and my main task at the moment is helping to implement the system and deciding procedures for workflow.

Why I stayed at it!

I found it hard returning to study as a mature-age student; and physically tiring working full time and studying part time for three years. I think the main reason for not giving up was stubbornness — not dreams of academic glory or a larger pay packet! Although I must admit to being both proud of my 'bit of paper' and angry at its subsequent lack of value in Western Australia.

Involvement with the LAA

Although I can see the prestige and pleasure one can get from belonging to a professional association, my reasons for joining the LAA were not entirely altruistic. In 1985 broadbanding was introduced in this state and library assistants/technicians were placed on the Level 1 salary scale along with library aides/clerks. Although not disadvantaged from a monetary point of view, library technicians no longer have a career or promotion structure.

Library staff would appear to have a number of unions representing them around Australia which means in effect that we are minority groups with no real negotiating power with employers or unions — at least that is my experience in this state. The LAA brings us all together into a cohesive whole and I thought I would join and work towards improving the image and profile of library technicians.

I have been Secretary of the Technicians Section here for the past two years. This year I am on the Professional Development Committee of Branch Council and I am part of a working party which is organising a workshop on task analysis in libraries. This is aimed at decision makers and one of its objectives is to clearly define the different roles played by

librarians, library technicians and library aides in library staffing structures. I am hoping that one of the results of the workshop will be that library technicians can be seen as being able to perform (both by training and experience) those duties that will enable them to be placed on the Level 2 scale of broadbanding.

On reflection...

I'm glad I work in libraries — I find the work stimulating and interesting, but I think we have an image problem. The general public still think that all people who work in libraries are librarians, that all they do is read and look after books and make things difficult to find on the shelves! I do my best to set the record straight but wearing flat shoes, a bun and glasses doesn't help — I'm too much like the stereotype!

My hope for the future is that our profession will become less introspective, more dynamic and active in the field of self promotion, attract lively and outgoing staff, and we will be able to sell ourselves to the community, both as a great profession to work in and as potential providers of 'Information to a Nation'.

Christine Cresswell



Queensland Institute of Technology
2 George Street GPO Box 2434 Brisbane Q. 4001

FACULTY OF LAW

QIT is the second largest tertiary institution in Queensland with over 9500 students and 1000 full-time staff. The Campus is located in the City of Brisbane adjacent to the Botanic Gardens. The Faculty of Law has over 1250 students, 36 full-time academic staff and 180 part-time lecturers and tutors.

ASSISTANT LAW LIBRARIAN

Position: Assist with the Law Library Course and Assignment, assist with the Moot Program, work appropriate shifts in the Law Library and deputise for the Law Librarian. The appointment will be for up to three years in the first instance.

Qualifications/Skills: A Law degree, an ALAA qualification or equivalent, appropriate library and, if possible, law library experience and teaching ability or potential.

Conditions: Salary range \$24,765 to \$28,246 pa. The successful applicant will be eligible for relocation assistance and study assistance. It is hoped that the successful applicant will be able to take up the position in early July 1988. Smoking is not permitted in QIT buildings.

Selection: Selection criteria and duty statement are available from Personnel (07) 223 2121.

Further information: For further information contact Mr Tom Cain, Dean, Faculty of Law, on (07) 223 2227.

Applications: Applications and envelopes should quote 59/88 and include evidence of qualifications and experience plus names, addresses and telephone numbers of at least two referees. Applications should address the selection criteria and should reach the Personnel Manager by 5.00pm, 27 May 1988.

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER



Australian War Memorial

Curators for Research Collections

Following a recent restructure, the Australian War Memorial is seeking staff at the following levels for its Research Centre:

Curator 1 (\$28,586–34,474)
Assistant Curator 2 (\$23,737–27,030)

Vacancies are available in the library, archival and photograph, sound and film areas. People with qualifications and experience in any of the three areas are invited to apply specifying the area or areas for which they wish to be considered.

Responsibilities Include:

Curator 1 (Various)

Assist the section head in managing the section; responsible for controlling the program of work of one or more major areas of the collection or of one major activity; assist with or undertake independently the development and implementation of policies, strategies, systems and standards for the care, control and utilisation of one or more major areas of the collection; supervise, direct and train subordinate staff; participate in the planning and production of exhibitions; conduct research; assist and advise users of the collection; represent the Memorial at relevant forums.

Assistant Curator 2 (Various)

Under direction, control, maintain and care for a particular part or aspect of the collections; supervise and train subordinate staff; assist with the development and implementation of policies, strategies, systems and standards for parts of the collections or for particular functions; undertake special projects or other duties as required.

Assistant Curator 2 (ABN Cataloguer)

Responsible for accessioning and cataloguing the book, serial and pamphlet collections using the Australian Bibliographic Network (ABN). He or she will direct a team of contract cataloguers and also supervise and train other staff in the use of ABN and liaise with the ABN Office as necessary.

Conditions: Successful applicants will be permanently appointed to the Australian Public Service and therefore must be an Australian citizen or be both eligible for and willing to take out citizenship. Normal APS conditions of service will apply.

Applications: Details containing relevant personal particulars including qualifications and experience together with the details of two referees should be forwarded to:

The Recruitment Officer
Australian War Memorial
GPO Box 345
Canberra ACT 2601

by 20 May 1988. Applicants are advised to obtain a duty statement and the selection criteria from Peggy Patafta (062) 43 4275 and to address the criteria in their applications.

Enquiries: Telephone Paul Macpherson (062) 43 4300 or Bill Fogarty (062) 43 4251.

The Australian War Memorial is an equal opportunity employer.

ABI-85182

SABBATICAL LEAVE

Ghanian Chartered Librarian with AMLS from the University of Michigan would like to spend one year on sabbatical leave in an Australian library from August/September 1988. Mr Lawrence Gayne has experience in public, special and university librarianship. Anyone interested in offering a position can contact him c/ Reference Librarian, Bayero University Library, PMB 3011, Kano, Nigeria.