

Feedback

Why should I join ALIA?

Eva Fisch, Victorian Branch Councillor, reports on a recent recruitment function and some questions that came out of it

STUDENT recruitment nights are becoming an annual event on the Victorian ALIA calendar, to promote the benefits of ALIA to potential members. This year we tried out two new approaches. In addition to promoting the event to information science students through library schools, we invited unemployed librarians to attend the function by placing a notice in the 'Training and tuition section' of the *Age*. This was highly successful, attracting more than twenty people.

We altered the format of the evening from a short address by representatives of each section, to a panel of guest speakers (including representatives from School Librarians, UCRLS, Library Technicians, Public Libraries and Sections, Health/Specials, 'Non-traditional careers', and a new graduate). Our compere, John Levett, asked each of the panellists questions on:

- Benefits of ALIA membership for librarians, library technicians, students and unemployed;
- Future developments/legal/ethical issues in librarianship;
- Personal experiences in job hunting;
- Networking with colleagues—what it means in practice and how it really works!

This stimulated the audience to join in and a lively question and answer period followed. The opportunity to continue the discussion was provided during the ample supper provided by Victorian Branch.

About 115 people attended and twenty signed up on the night. Quite a few others took away membership forms and indicated that they would be joining in the near future. Some indicated in the evaluation forms (given to all those attending), that cost barred them from a continuing student/unemployed membership. However, I think that the goodwill generated by the evening will stand ALIA in good stead for a long time to come.

The thirty evaluation forms provided some interesting information. About 65% of the respondents were students, the rest were unemployed or not employed in librarianship. There was a wide spread of ages; roughly 2/3rds were aged 20–30, 1/6th were 31–40 and the remaining 1/6th were over 40. Females accounted for 3/4ths of those filling out evaluation forms. Seven respondents were already members of ALIA!

Some of the suggestions for making ALIA more attractive to students were:

- workshops on strategies for gaining employment/career paths;

- it needs to be cheaper; functions are too expensive;
- provide more training opportunities, more information on job seeking;
- the idea of internships is interesting;
- a students section?
- a student support group; student group interest meetings;
- provide 6 months free initial membership/free your first year or if unemployed;
- help with employment/job contacts;
- (indicate) members could earn a high salary and a respectable place in society;
- opportunities for work experience after graduation;
- courses in more practical skills for Grad Dip students who often feel they learn only the basics and quickly too!
- ongoing professional training.

This was a successful exercise because of the large turnout, the informed debate, and the positive and enthusiastic nature of the students. Victorian Branch Council will follow up some of the suggestions, and will invite those who attended the evening to other Branch activities.

If anyone would like to find out more about this Victorian Branch initiative, please contact me (Eva Fisch) on (03) 479 2926. ■

School Libraries Section (WA Group)

WA Young Readers' Book Award

OVER THIRTY ONE THOUSAND votes were cast by young readers in school and public libraries to record their judgement on a primary and a secondary list of thirty titles each. Votes came in from all parts of the state, including an increasing number of country schools. The results were:

Primary section

Highest ranging book and Hoffman Award for the highest ranking Australian author—Paul Jennings 'Uncanny'

Secondary section

Highest ranking book—Brian Jacques 'Mattimen' Hoffman Award for the highest ranking Australian author—Victor Kelleher 'Brother Night'.

This is Brian Jacques's third win in a row. His two previous books in the series, 'Redwall' and 'Mossflower' won in 1990 and 1991.

The winning book is not necessarily the one with the greatest number of votes overall but with the highest proportion of 'Terrific' votes (the highest category) and lowest of 'Awful' votes. The numbers again support the general belief that girls are more avid readers of fiction than boys. ■