



Phil Teece
Industrial Information Officer

The ALIA General Council has decided the Association must take a broader approach to employment issues to deal with Australia's quickly changing labour market. At its meeting in July, Council endorsed recommendations by its Workforce Committee for a refocusing of attention to the workplace level, where so many major changes are now taking place.

The Workforce Sub-Program will develop proposals on a range of work-related topics, including competency development, training accreditation, credit transfer and recognition of prior learning. It will continue to assist members with workplace reform and enterprise bargaining and attempt a longer-term analysis of changing employment profiles and technological developments.

Recent statements confirm the Federal Government's goal of moving most workers onto enterprise agreements. It is certain that individual library workers will have to be much more directly involved in negotiations than previously. For some, in larger organisations, this may mean more active participation in consultative committees and information groups if their concerns are to get onto the bargaining agenda. Others will need to insist on creation of real staff involvement processes as a precondition for bargaining. Some members will have to negotiate directly for themselves.

An introductory booklet, *Enterprise bargaining and workplace reform: understanding Australia's new industrial relations system*, can be obtained from the National Office. Further booklets on drawing up and negotiating enterprise agreements are being developed and will be available shortly.

The Workforce Committee is also looking at options for providing direct assistance and training to members, especially those in special libraries who lack trade union support. I hope to be able to say something more specific about this in the next Picketline. Mean-

time, I repeat my earlier invitation for any member needing advice to contact me.

An important part of the Workforce Sub-Program is the Library Competency Standards Development Project. This will draw up national competency standards for library staff and seek their endorsement by the National Training Board. The Project's Taskforce met for the second time in July. Standing committees have been set up in all States and Territories to act as advisory bodies to the national Taskforce and ALIA is represented on all these groups. Your State Branch can tell you the name of your local representative.

ALIA's representative on the national Taskforce is Anne Hazell who is doing a marvellous job in ensuring that an Association perspective is included in all the peak group's work. But there is a limit to what one person can do and, of course, Anne cannot be in more than one place at a time. So do please support her efforts by taking every opportunity to attend State-level meetings and by contacting your local spokespersons to have your say. And remember this includes employer and union representatives for your particular sector, as well as an ALIA person.

To date decisions have been made on the scope of the Project and its methodology. All workers who participate in or contribute to the primary operations of the library and information services industry will be covered. A mapping process to identify where workers are located, their numbers, classifications, union and award coverage, as well as the extent of their training and education opportunities is being carried out.

Later, information will be gathered from all sectors about the competencies needed to work in Australian libraries. It will be analysed and used to prepare draft competency standards. These will then be the subject of comment from across the industry. After revision against industry validation, final stand-

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ards will be submitted to the National Training Board.

After they are endorsed by the Board, the standards can be expected to play a major role in various workplace settings, including new classification structures in enterprise agreements and awards, identification and prioritising of training and development programs, job descriptions and selection criteria, recognition of prior learning, career path and succession planning.

When you have thought about the breadth of these areas and their importance to every aspect of your work and your career development, I think you will understand why Anne Hazell has been urging every ALIA member to get involved in this exercise. You can start by asking for information and follow up by making sure your reaction to it gets heard. While the opportunity is there now, you are not likely to be able to change things after you see final standards and realise they don't reflect the realities of your profession. By then the horse will have bolted!

As we all grapple with the uncertainties of enterprise bargaining, one particular concern is the danger that it may worsen the employment position of women. Recognition of this is found in recent change to the Federal Sex Discrimination Act. Amendments now make discrimination in new awards or enterprise agreements, dismissal on grounds of family responsibilities and victimisation in employment grounds for formal complaint under the Act.

Individual complainants under the Sex Discrimination Act will now have access to the Industrial Relations Commission, a major change. Previously, no individual could gain access to the Commission because formal registration of organisations (such as unions and employer associations) was a prerequisite. In future, the Sex Discrimination Commissioner will automatically become a formal party to any dispute arising under the Act's provisions. ■