

ALIIS is a year old

Robyn Stokes: where it is and what it has done

The Australian Library and Information International Services (ALIIS) is a network of key Australian libraries, education institutions and information professionals from all sectors of the Australian library and information community. It was established in 1992 by the National Library of Australia (NLA), ALIA, the International Development Program of Australian Universities and Colleges (IDP), and the library of the Australian National University (ANU).

It aims to meet the growing need for high quality support and technical training for libraries and information agencies in Asia and the Pacific region. ALIIS is a cooperative venture which seeks to promote and coordinate Australia's involvement in the development of library and information services in overseas libraries.

Structure of ALIIS

The ALIIS Secretariat acts as a clearinghouse of information, a point of contact and coordinator of negotiations. IDP has agreed to support the Secretariat during the inception phase of ALIIS and will review its sponsorship at the end of 1993.

The ALIIS committee has representatives from ALIA, NLA, IDP, and the ANU library and meets approximately six times a year. It determines policy and management issues.

Registered members of the network are suppliers of services such as consultancy services, short-course provision, short-term work attachments, etc. Each activity is negotiated through the Secretariat with a formal agreement between the Secretariat and the individual or organisation concerned.

Communication

ALIIS has established a network of representatives in each state, through e-mail, fax and news items in *inCite*. Minutes of ALIIS meetings are sent to all state representatives. The ASIALIB listserv is used to disseminate items of general interest, including professional activities within the Asia/Pacific region. (To sign on, send an e-mail message to majordomo@info.anu.edu.au, as follows: *subscribe asialib [your e-mail address]*. Leave the subject blank.) ALIIS also liaises with other organisations such as APSIG and the evolving net-

work for conservation and preservation training.

Achievements

In its initial year ALIIS has concentrated on promotion of its services in Southeast Asia and on the development of its network in Australia. A brochure has been produced and widely distributed both in Australia and overseas. In addition, ALIIS has been promoted through personal networking, talks at workshops, conferences and meetings, and through articles in library and information journals and newsletters. ALIIS has put forward a selection of Australian trainers or consultants for international library development projects in Nepal, Indonesia, Solomon Islands, Kuwait and Malaysia. In two of these projects, ALIIS has been successful, two are pending a result and in the unsuccessful one, ALIIS was one of three short-listed international agencies. Currently expressions of interest are being sought for an opportunity in Laos.

ALIIS also facilitates linkages and arranges work placements for regional librarians in Australian libraries.

When competing for international projects, work experience in Southeast Asia or the Pacific, as well as in the required field of subject specialisation, are often essential criteria. If this requirement is not fulfilled, the tender is not internationally competitive. Linkages between libraries in Australia and the Asia/Pacific region, which enable exchange of staff for work experience in libraries, are therefore a valuable means of increasing the relevant overseas experience of Australian librarians.

The ALIIS Secretariat has also developed a register of libraries, schools library and information studies, and library and information professionals. It sources ALIA's register of library and information courses.

The establishment and promotion of a network such as ALIIS takes time, so that its first year's achievements are considerable. Its presence in the region contributes to the promotion of Australian expertise in service industries overseas, which is a current priority of the Australian government.

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