



Nora Stewart  
Training and Development Officer

Another year of wonderful possibilities in continuing education lies ahead! All sorts of people in differing and sometimes multiple roles—employers, employees, self-employed, unemployed people and students—will be planning to attend events or perhaps to offer them. New professional and personal discoveries will make it all exciting.

The provision of training and development seems to be driven as much by legislative mechanisms as it is by organisational and personal needs. The Training Guarantee Act has worked wonders in raising the emphasis and importance of on-going training. Employers are faced with the task of planning and implementing a training agenda to meet the newest Training Guarantee criteria of 1.5% expenditure of any payroll exceeding \$222 000.\*

But the rhetoric of 'training is good for you' often seems a long way from the reality. Why is this?

The criteria for meeting the Training Guarantee Act requirements are quite narrow. For example, many people are employed in situations with small or negligible payrolls including consultants, unemployed, mothers at home and students. A recent survey† shows that employers with smaller payrolls were less likely to comply with the Act. On the positive side, an individual in this situation has the option of undertaking self-education and claiming

most of the education-related expenses over \$250 on a personal income tax return.

Also, there is very little emphasis on the *quality* of activities under the Training Guarantee Act. The three main criteria are deliberately loose to allow flexibility, but unfortunately it appears that some employers have abused this. An accompanying attitude survey showed that the level of T&D activity had not increased, only the *level of recording of expenditure*.

The current legislation may have its deficiencies. However, the prime reason for training remains the same as it has always been—for the benefit of the participant, organisations and society as a whole, not just to meet arbitrary criteria. Regardless of whether the Training Guarantee is a technical success, it is important to adhere to the spirit in which the Act was introduced. ALIA is aware of this and by encouraging high standards, adds quality to your professional development. Let's not get into training and continuing professional development just for the sake of it.

For those seeking to improve and update skills and to keep pace with the changes in the environment of library and information technology, the choices sometimes seem bewildering and sometimes too narrow. Despite the legislation, there are often barriers—not enough money to attend or to offer training, or lack of information about what options are available

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that will suit your needs and your budget.

The Training and Development program at ALIA is in existence for precisely this purpose—to provide quality information on the availability of continuing professional education activities around Australia, and to identify unmet needs and ensure they are addressed:

- *the T&D database*: for ALIA and many other T&D activities, the T&D database at National Office contains information on all sorts of possibilities, including workshops, conferences and publications. The easiest way to access this is to leave a message on the (008) 02 0071 for the Training and Development Officer to answer your queries;
- *inCite*: watch for *Train Line* and the *EVENTS* column in *inCite* for updated information about ALIA (and other) activities of professional interest;
- *publications*: for information on tertiary education courses in the library and information profession you need look no further than the booklet *Courses in Library and Information Science 1992-1993*. This is available gratis from ALIA National Office, PO Box E441 Queen Victoria Terrace ACT 2600;
- *distance education packages*: self-instructional packages are available from ALIA on conservation, automation of small libraries and marketing library and information services. ■

\* Further information for employers on understanding and meeting the requirements of the Training Guarantee Act is available in the booklet *Guidelines for the Library and Information Industry* for \$10 members, \$15 non-members from ALIA National Office.

† *Training Guarantee Compliance Results*, Training Guarantee Group, ATO Albury-Wodonga: December 1992.

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