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The teleconference on 3 March of Branch Training and Development Officers, ALIA's T&D Services Officer Nora Stewart, and Kay Poustie (Chair, Board of Education) and Christine Goodacre (Deputy Chair, Board of Education) resulted in a sharing of ideas and approaches to training and development for members.

New T&D Officers settling into office found it extremely useful to get advice and tips from those more experienced, to supplement documentation such as the *T&D Officers' Event Support Kit* and the *Division Office Bearers' Guide*.

Given the importance training and development has for all our members in entering or reentering the workforce, the role of the T&D Officer in divisions carries a great deal of responsibility. Those participating in the teleconference considered ways to assist them in effectively meeting the needs of members and the resources needed to provide T&D programs.

Each Branch reported on its training and development priorities. There were similarities, such as the Internet, general automation and management issues, leading to discussion on how best to identify needs. Are surveys the best way to gather information? If so, how often? The SA and Tasmanian representative provided forms used for the evaluation of local needs. These will be developed into a proforma to be provided to all Training and Development Officers.

The Western Australian Branch has found that a T&D Committee can support the T&D Officer, spreading the load and so achieving more. The teleconferences continue to provide a good information sharing and support network. Queensland Branch has developed a checklist for organising T&D activities which is being considered for use by all divisions.

Finally, Christine Goodacre gave a few tips on assessing the suitability of an online access or Internet training course:

- what level is the course (eg., introductory);
- what platform is the course being provided on (eg., UNIX, Mac);
- is it provided on site or at the trainer's venue (there are different advantages depending on the needs);
- what topics are covered and how could the course be structured.

National library sector plan almost there

The first National Industry Training Plan for the library sector will be presented to the Arts Training Australia Board on 25 March. The Plan is to go to both the Department of Employment, Education and Training and the Australian National Training Authority and will contribute to the identification of future training priorities and funding requirements. The Association has been involved

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throughout by representation on State Industry Training Boards and the national focus group. Significant training priorities include

- the development and implementation of industry competency standards;
- training to increase skills in areas such as management, new and developing technologies, advanced level skills for specialisation, changing services and service delivery needs;
- mechanisms for the recognition of prior learning; more flexible delivery of training, registration of providers and accreditation of training currently being undertaken on the job.

All the issues in the paper are familiar to those of us in the library sector and action is already being taken on many of them. The importance is that they have now been brought together for inclusion in the training agenda planning. Thank you to all those members who have given their time and thoughts in this consultative process. The Industry Plan will be updated by Arts Training regularly so if you would like to contribute in future let your Branch know.

Competency standards

We expect that the validation stage of the draft competency standards for the library sector, now being developed by Arts Training Australia, will begin in May or June. The very brief first working draft of the competencies has been considered by the National Taskforce but not in great detail—the document of which it is part is designed mainly to provide a focus for the ATA discussions in Tasmania, WA, SA and the ACT. The Taskforce made some preliminary recommendations on the fields. The first complete draft of the competencies should be available to the Taskforce at its next meeting on 4 May.

The Association has put names forward for membership of the Reference Group which will assist the Project Officer during the next few months. Several ALIA members in the Northern Territory, NSW and South Australia have been nominated, the only states where no primary data collection has occurred. The Reference Group will not meet; it can therefore be supplemented whenever expertise of particular kinds is required.

The draft standards will be distributed to all Branches which will be establishing a consultative group. All responses will be coordinated through the National Office for response through the Association's National Taskforce representative, Anne Hazell.

If there is anything you would like to discuss or know about competency standards please contact me or Phil Teece at the National Office. It is not an easy agenda to understand but is important as competencies will impact on education, training and the workplace. ■