

Infostars: the next generation

The participants of the first Aurora Leadership Institute have been described by facilitators John Shannon and Becky Schreiber as a top quality group with all the characteristics and potential to be the next generation of leaders in the Australasian library scene. During the week, they encouraged them to assess the information services environment, discover common ground, encourage appropriate risk taking, and use themselves strategically to provide leadership within the profession.

AIMA Training and Consultancy Services brought John and Becky, designers of the original Snowbird Leadership Institute on which Aurora is based, to run the program in Australia for the first time in November. The program is sponsored by Dynix Australia, Margaret Trask and Swets Subscription Service.

In the program, 32 handpicked participants were grouped with mentors to learn about styles and skills of leadership. Brenda McConchie, executive director of AIMA, says the program is unusual in that it focuses completely on the individual discovering his or her own style. 'This also makes it very intense and very tough at times', she said, 'as participants —

and sometimes the mentors as well — discover the good and the "needs work" about their own personal leadership approach'.

The mentors group included David Malpas, managing director of Dynix Australia and Ian McCallum, manager, information services of Ferntree Computer Corporation; director of the State Library of Victoria and ALIA 1996 President Elect Helen Tait; State Library of Tasmania director Robyn Collins; Earle Gow, chief librarian of La Trobe University; Helen Renwick, university librarian of Massey University in New Zealand; Christine Crocker, now a consultant and trainer for AIMA; Brenda and Warren Horton, director general of the National Library of Australia. This mix provided an unusually broad range of experience which the mentors willingly shared with participants throughout the six-day program, an opportunity they de-



Class of 95: participants and mentors for the first Aurora Leadership Institute at Thredbo.

scribed as a chance to 'give back' to the profession.

In years past, the Snowbird program has built an extraordinarily strong network of the mentors and participants according to Brenda. The same development has happened with Aurora, and it began almost immediately. 'We are delighted to see this happening with Aurora', Brenda said, 'and we expect the same support and innovation will continue to grow with this group. It is one of the most valuable results of the program because it fosters the co-operative network of the profession, nurturing vision and, in turn, touching everyone the participants work with.'

Lee Welsh



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Telephone: (06) 262 1223 • Facsimile: (06) 257 1703 • E-mail: aima@nla.gov.au