

Your voice

Support for young members

We are again, indebted to John Brudenall. This time it is for his thoughtful and creative discussion paper (*inCite* March 1996, page 22) about ways to encourage younger members to become more active in ALIA.

I suggest that the two main inhibiting factors to participation by younger members are relevance and cost. Mr Brudenall has useful suggestions for countering both, which ALIA should endorse. I offer a further suggestion on the matter of cost.

Attendance at the biennial conference can be greatly stimulating and invigorating to us all, but particularly to new and younger members. The whole spectrum of the profession can be seen, senior speakers can provide a model and an inspiration, and social intercourse can be really rewarding. But the cost of attending our

conferences is a real disincentive to young members. The conference fees are now far too high, and to them must be added travel and accommodation costs.

If ALIA is going to attract the participation of younger members it must set its conference fees at an affordable level. I do not think the Melbourne conference fees have yet been revealed, but if they are anything like those of recent biennial conference (that is, many hundreds of dollars) and important opportunity will have been lost. But what is new? I have been saying this for years.

Neil Radford, University of Sydney library

...and from a young member

I am writing in response to John Brudenall's article 'Will the young members of ALIA please stand up?' (*inCite* March 1996

page 22). I am a young member of ALIA and heartily support the ideas of a discount membership fee schedule for the first three years. (Unfortunately I will not be able to take advantage of it if implemented). Unlike other mature age students in my library class, my first library job was my first job — I graduated as a poor student and was hit with a high cost for ALIA membership when I could least afford it.

As a keen member of the Western Australian mentoring program and committee member, I was especially interested in John's emphasis on mentoring. I would like to point out that Western Australia was the first state to set up a mentoring scheme within the library profession (across all types of libraries) and has to date received no funding from ALIA to support the noble endeavour. I would not be where I am today (profes-

sionally and personally) without my mentor and professional networks — developed through my involvement with the Western Australian mentoring program. To date, the committee has produced a document on the aims, objectives and guidelines of the scheme which has been provided to the Victorian and Queensland mentoring groups (all without any financial support). My suggestion is (very bluntly I know) for ALIA to put some money where its mouth is. Anyone can extol the virtues of mentoring but to make it happen requires more than that!

I think the only way young ALIA members will be able to stand up is if they are supported and mentored by other (older) members of the library and information profession. I would welcome any comments.

**Janet Beattie
University of Western
Australia business library**

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Job clubs

I wish to respond to John Brudenall's article dealing with 'young' ALIA members. I would like to outline some ways ALIA may wish to consider when attracting new and young members. I have had some experience in dealing with 'young' and 'new' members having been in the recent past secretary to ADLIBS, the Curtin Library School students association, student representative to Western Australian Branch council, and activities president of the Curtin student guild.

- ALIA, via State branches, might wish to encourage young members attendance at branch and special interest group meetings by arranging travel assistance to and from meetings. Many young members are students and have limited access to vehicles and adequate public transport. Travel assistance can simply mean meeting-going members offering young members a lift to meetings or assistance with car-pooling.
- Encouraging young members and students to attend conferences, seminars and other ALIA sponsored professional development activities by offering discounts, subsidies, and/or reimbursements on registration fees, reserving places at courses and seminars for young members, and negotiating with training providers of non-ALIA sponsored courses to reduce the registration fees. Again, many young members are students or first-year employees on a low salary band. Travel and accommodation could possibly be provided by ALIA members in the immediate region of the conference (for example, billeting and car pooling).
- Active promotion of ALIA and ALIA activities by branches and special interest groups through library schools, and promotion meaning much more than just one 'get to know you evening' a year! What is needed is regular and appropriate promotion outlin-

ing why ALIA is relevant to the library studies student and first year employee. This may include regular visits to schools and workplaces by ALIA staff and local ALIA members to library schools speaking on topical issues.

- The mentoring scheme to be encouraged and provided with adequate resources and funding to attract mentors and mentorees, to be administered and promoted by ALIA branches, with better matching of young members and mentors with six-monthly reviews.
- The provision of a student or young member representative on state and national councils with equal voting rights as other elected members. ALIA may wish to consider having one young representative from each state and territory present at General Council meetings or a nominated representative according to a formal election process.

Provision of assistance with achieving employment within the profession by ALIA setting up 'job clubs' within each state office. These 'job clubs' would have information on personnel and industrial matters, resume and job interview information, and details of new and existing contract, part-time and full-time employment positions available within each state/territory, as well as information on obtaining overseas placements. These 'job clubs' could also organise evening/afternoon meetings with employers in each state/territory and provide details on advertised positions in trade journals and newspapers.

These are a few ways ALIA can attract and hold young members. I am sure there are many other ways and I hope that ALIA acts upon members advice.

Nicholas Duncan
Karratha library

Who wrote that?

I write to congratulate the Association on the attractiveness and readability of the new format of *inCite*. However, in the way of

old presidents, I must also express my concern about the erratic habit of omitting the 'by-line' from one or two pieces in every issue.

The inclusion of *Vital link* in the latest issue did enable those of us who are incorrigible sticky-beaks to easily check the likely identity of the writer of 'A week in the life of an ALIA Branch president' (internal clues lead to the deduction of the State). In other cases it has not been so easy.

In the interest of the maintaining the memory of the Association as accurately as possible could we please have overt identification of authors?

Jennifer Cram

Editor's note: We apologise for omitting Sue McKnight's name from the story in question: this was an oversight in layout of the magazine. inCite has a policy of acknowledging the author, if known, of all submitted material.

Expert advice

I read with interest the article by Phil Teece 'The future of unionism' (*inCite*, March 1996, p24).

My own recent experience confirms Phil's comment about individual employment contracts and the need for more expert advice to help individual employees. I have reason to thank Phil himself for his assistance in my discussions with my employer during the introduction of new conditions of employment and the implementation of a new classification structure.

Phil's expertise in interpreting the work level guidelines and advising on salary scales was most helpful in clarifying my role and salary within the classification established by my employer. His support was important to me as I am the only librarian employed by my organisation.

It was certainly an advantage to be able to call on such a service from our professional association. I appreciated Phil's approachability and his readiness to assist in the process of my

request for reclassification, which was successful. I believe his participation was helpful to my employer as well as myself. Expert advice is necessary in such negotiations, and his article offered a scenario for the future which has definite plausibility.

Blair MacDonagh

Fighting the fair fight

Phil Teece's article 'The equal-pay principle' (*inCite*, February 1996, p30) dealing with equal-pay issues was a breakthrough to ALIA's role in addressing inequities in the profession.

For many years members have seen ALIA as an organisation which has led the general philosophical thrust of qualification, competence and professionalism. It has not been seen as an organisation which has concerned itself with 'bread and butter' issues such as total remuneration and/or status issues.

Phil Teece's article highlights situations which are all too common in the library world. For example, councils have traditionally undervalued librarians vis a vis other professions, not only in salary but in total remuneration. How many librarians compared to engineers, planners, health inspectors are given private use of council vehicles. Almost none.

These are real issues of inequality which it is comforting to see ALIA embracing. Keep up the good work.

(names and addresses supplied)

Your voice

Your letters on any issue of relevance to the library and information sector are welcomed.

All letters should be addressed to the inCite editor and may be e-mailed to incite@alia.org.au, faxed to 06 282 2249, or posted to: Your voice, ALIA, PO Box E441, Queen Victoria Terrace, ACT 2600. Please include your name and postal address with your letter or e-mail.