

Online 97 — a huge success!

The Information Online and On Disc 97 conference and exhibition sponsored by the Information Science Section of ALIA was held on 21–23 January at the Sydney Convention Centre at Darling Harbour. Exhibitors were well represented and the conference attracted over 1200 delegates from Australian, New Zealand and farther afield who selected sessions to attend from a wide range of online topics. Challenging keynote addresses were given by overseas speakers Clifford Lynch of the University of California and Rebecca Lenzini of CARL, and Australian keynotes were given by Hugh Irvine, Peter Bakunowics and Rod Walkerden, with a masterly summing up by Neil McLean.

A special feature was Internet City, giving opportunities for Internet access, demonstrations, and meeting Celebrity surfers.

Social highlights included the Harbour Cruise on the tall ships *Solway Lass* and *Svanen*, the cocktail reception, and the 'Searchers' soiree' and 'On disco'.

below: National Library of Australian staff meet Mr Television at the cocktail reception



top: Enjoying the breeze on the Harbour Cruise



above: Clifford Lynch on Chaos and control in global networking

Studios3 Photography

Supporting recognition

Piloting is underway in developing appropriate models and documentation for a National Recognition Strategy at para-professional levels (reported in the December issue of *inCite*). Interviews to test the proposed models have been held in Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia in both urban and country areas, and with assistance from a wide variety of candidates: those seeking to join a study program, those articulating from superseded certificates or associate diplomas (even the Registration Examinations!), and those who wished to have their skills assessed against the Library Industry Competency Standards.

An interesting feature is the amount of support provided by employers and supervisors in university, public, TAFE and special libraries, many of whom attended the interviews and assisted the candidates to articulate and demonstrate their claims to most benefit. Others, while not attending, confirmed skills and aptitudes through written statements. In the case where six peo-

ple from one large library sought recognition, they worked as a group to prepare their documentation and discuss the type of information they needed to present. The management of this library was extremely supportive and encouraging.

Considerable interest and support came from the TAFE sector, especially at the departmental and teaching levels in library and information studies, but also from management and curriculum. The models used in this project, which focussed on either the competency standards or the curriculum, can be transferred to other discipline areas in TAFE which have nationally accredited competency standards and curriculum. Library educators have contributed extensively to this project by selecting the appropriate variety of candidates, through mentoring and supporting the selected people, and by managing the administrative workload generated by the outcomes.

As might be expected from the wide

range of work and other experiences of the candidates, and the amount of formal and informal studies undertaken, the results of the recognition pilots vary considerably. Some candidates have been recommended for approximately ninety-five per cent recognition, others for very little. The candidates have been most surprised and gratified to see their experiences translate into completed competencies or modules, and the immediate progress into a course made explicit.

Often the process itself was a learning experience for candidates: some had attended workshops run by the library educators, others had individual support from a library educator or from work colleagues. The input of a well-informed mentor can notably influence the candidate's attitude and preparation. Further information can be obtained from the project manager (Donna Reid) on 06 207 3360 or e-mail donna_reid@cit.act.edu.au.