

Building strategic alliances



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As a director of CREATE I get to work with CEOs of many of the cultural sector industry organisations and union representatives. In comparing our sector with others we are clearly well ahead in having established formal education and training as a basis for practice. I am very aware that the training reform agenda is a difficult policy area, with state, territory and federal governments seeking to pursue their own political agendas, which do not always include co-operation. It is important though that, as a sector for which training and new skill development is so important, we gain as much benefit as possible from training reform, such as the following current projects.

CREATE is working with the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) on a proposal to develop additional resources for the museum and library and information services industry training package. CREATE is also planning a professional development workshop on the training package on the Friday following the ALIA2000 biennial conference.

The National Centre for Vocational Education and Training Research is undertaking two research projects:

- to identify the factors influencing the take up of vocational education and training; and
- to identify the gap between the acquisition of skills and qualifications.

The ALIA National Office is participating in an ANTA project being done by consultants, RATIO, to investigate the use of design in work processes. The centrepiece of the project is a model outlining stages those designing a system, process or product would go. The model allows individuals to think differently about how they work and encourages thinking through new or improved processes or services. Two National Office staff will be interviewed by the RATIO researcher as part of the pilot. I am a member of the project steering committee and one of the first suggestions we made was that a term other than 'design' be used, as, although its definition within the project may be appropriate to the project, its more widely accepted definition is misleading in this context. It is early days yet, but the project has the potential to define cross-sectoral generic competencies which could bridge the gap between Meyer competencies and graduate characteristics.

Formal workplace assessment is a component of the training reform agenda which has been slow to achieve take up in many sectors, including library and information services. Interestingly the National Assessors and Workplace Training Body (NAWTB), the body responsible for trainer and assessment standards, has been incorporated into the Business Services Industry Training Advisory Body.

Book Industry Assistance Plan

The government assisted four-year campaign to promote the *intrinsic value of books, reading and literacy (particularly for children) and the books of Australian writers* has commenced with the formation of a reference group and the establishment of policy objectives and an broad outline of a four-year campaign to:

- develop new readership;
- encourage participation, appreciation, value and enjoyment of reading;
- improve equity of access to books;
- promote the long-term benefits and health of the industry by developing a series of campaign initiatives;
- embrace current information technology media and to investigate ways in which the Australian book industry can utilise these media to promote reading and literacy;
- ensure sustainability and potential for self-funding beyond the four-year campaign;
- maximise existing industry alliances and establish partnerships with other media; and
- utilise the strong community links that already exist between booksellers and the schools and libraries in their local area as a literacy/educational resource network.

I recently met with project consultant, Peter Davies of Redhanded, to discuss the direction of the campaign and the specific involvement of libraries and ALIA. Discussion focussed on the importance of libraries in providing information to the public and what library promotion campaigns currently exist in Australia and overseas, for example, Australian Library Week. The discussion also focussed on the benefits that libraries hope to gain from this campaign — reinforcing the role of libraries as providers of information to all Australians and highlighting the diverse range of information and services available within libraries.

At this stage it looks like the campaign will initially target a specific demographic group, the 20–39 year old, singles and couples with no children and few or no books in the house. The initial promotion campaign will focus on re-establishing reading as a leisure activity, increasing the amount of time spent reading for pleasure and re-establishing the place of books in the home.

Further stages of the promotion campaign will be directed towards the lower socio-economic group of 20–39 year olds, who have lower levels of literacy and have not had early influence of books, and 12–20 year old boys who are identified as reluctant readers. The campaign will be worked through in more detail at a July meeting of the reference group.

If you would like further information about the Book Industry Assistance Plan please contact Amanda Jacobsen at the ALIA National Office, phone 02 6285 1877 or e-mail: amanda.jacobsen@alia.org.au ■