

# The inaugural National Library Technicians' Day

Activities were held around the country on 16 May to celebrate the first ALIA National Library Technicians Day. This special day has been endorsed by ALIA, and will be an annual event as part of the Australian Library Week celebrations. The ALIA Library Technician Sections took advantage of the opportunity to plan activities that promoted ALIA, the profession, their role in libraries, and to celebrate their many achievements.

## ACT

Breakfast was held at the 'Waldorf on London' with eighteen library workers attending, including special guests Jan Gordan, president of the ACT Branch council and Donna Reid, a former and favoured teacher of many who attended. An impromptu poetry reading session set the mood for those attendees who continued on to work after the breakfast. The Waldorf on London is also the venue for the library technician get together during the ALIA 2000 conference.

## New South Wales

A celebratory breakfast with a magnificent view of the harbor was well attended, with lucky door prizes being well received. Special guests included Robbie Johnson (School of Library and Information Studies, Sydney Institute of Technology) who discussed his views on the development of library technicians throughout the ages, and the current course developments. Anne Brinson, the founding president of the NSW Library Technician Section, spoke about the reasons why library technicians became active in ALIA, and the support and encouragement that we have been given by colleagues including Warren Horton, Mairéad Browne, and Trevor Wakely to name but a few. Early library technicians day breakfast celebrations were also held on 15 May with regional groups in Bathurst and Coffs Harbour setting the scene for Australian Library Week in their areas.

## Far North Coast

Library assistants, librarians and library technicians celebrated over lunch in the bistro at the Goonellabah RSL Club. It was fantastic to have so many people from public, university and medical libraries all take the opportunity to attend. Sixteen library workers met for lunch and a chat as well as two identical young trainees in nappies who are taking an early start in library ca-

reers — thanks Riley and Jack!

I would like to thank ALIA for organising and supporting such a great national day of recognition for library technicians and all people who love libraries.

*Louise Summerville*

## Northern Territory

The library community held a breakfast at which twenty-three library workers attended. A small group of library technicians and librarians work very closely together providing services that covers a large geographic area, and decided that National Library Technicians' Day would be a day of celebration for all library workers. A great morning was had by all, and it is hoped that this tradition will continue.

## Queensland

Our first brisk May morning (by Brisbane standards) was no deterrent for twenty bright, alert and hungry Library Technicians who turned up at 7am for our celebratory breakfast. The festive scene at the Coffee Club, West End was enhanced by the arrival of the events co-ordinator with a colourful bunch of Australian Library Week balloons. Jo-Anne, our treasurer, was kept busy with collecting money for our special badges (yes, we sold out on the day!) and bookings for our coming annual dinner.

Our afternoon activity attracted about ten technicians to the Gallery Bar at the Conrad International Hotel. All were pleased to have the opportunity to unwind and catch up with each other at the end of a busy day. However commitments at the home front did not allow us to linger too long, except for two 'carefree' techies who the moved on to duelling with the 'one-arm-bandits' across the road at the Casino.

*Elaine West*



*Donna Reid, former head of library studies at Canberra Institute of TAFE, and Marion Boyd at the ACT library technicians' breakfast*

## South Australia

A morning tea hosted by the Library Studies Unit at Adelaide Institute of TAFE, was well attended by approximately fifty library and information workers. The library celebrations for the week included a student quiz, a free reference desk raffle and a staff internet challenge

Thirty guests attended a dinner held in Adelaide where the first ALIA, Library Technician Section [SA] Awards were presented. Heather Linnett was presented with the Achievement Award in recognition of her contribution to ALIA. Her innovative idea for weekend workshops to provide professional development for library and information workers has had continuing success, and generated the recent successful Victorian/NSW workshop. Jackie Williams was presented with the Merit Award for her suggestion of a National Library Technicians Day, resulting in a special day of celebration and unity across Australia.

Amongst special guests were Debbie Hill (the first president of SA Library Technician section and convenor of the first ALIA National Library Technicians' conference in Adelaide, 1980); Yvonne Ladd (graduate of the first library technician course in Adelaide); Robyn Matthews (educator, mentor and friend); and Kathy Sharrad, president of the ALIA National Library Technician section.

## Tasmania

Celebrated in style with a breakfast at the State Library in Hobart, and a cocktail party on the North West Coast.

## Victoria

Three members of the ALIA Library Technicians' Section [Vic] visited the staff and students at the Victoria University of Technology, to discuss work experiences, and their involvement in ALIA.

*Library workers celebrate at the Goonellabah RSL Club*





Marion Fielke, SA Library Technician's section president presenting an Achievement Award to Heather Linnett

Seventeen library workers gathered for dinner at the Thai Lemongrass restaurant in Carlton, including Trevor Wakely who was presented with a National Library Technicians' day badge. A champagne lunch was organised by Dawn Keller at the LaTrobe University in Bundorra, where discussions were focussed on career paths, ALIA, profiles and experiences. Philippa Read arranged a breakfast in Geelong. The day's activities were a great success, and seventy badges were sold and worn with pride to celebrate this special day.

## Western Australia

The West Australian Library Technicians Section celebrated with a dinner at Rosie O'Gradys in Northbridge. Library Technicians' Day badges were on sale, and Dr Shelda Debowski presented a talk based on the ALW theme of 'Libraries: Here for the

long run'. Shelda said that libraries must be proactive in selling their services to users, especially in response to the perception that everything is 'available on the net'. Her contention is that users are frequently unable to evaluate information from the net, and that even after training in evaluative skills, most users are unable to access the information they seek from the net. Libraries are well placed to add value to the information that is available by filtering sites, and repackaging the information that is found there.

Dr Debowski said that research showed that reference and circulation statistics for libraries are falling, indicating that less people are actually visiting the library. She stated that frequently people are accessing the library from home and she referred to these clients as the 'invisible user'. If we are to remain viable as information service providers we need to focus on these users and offer them service comparable to that which we give on-site.

The dinner

was well attended, and a lively discussion took place after Dr Debowski's talk.

### Bonnie Bruce

It is evident that library and information workers around Australia celebrated the first National Library Technicians' Day with great enthusiasm. Thank you to those who joined us for our celebrations, we hope you enjoyed the activities as much as we did. The planning, organisation and celebration of the activities was highlighted with a great sense of achievement and pride as we reflected on how far we have progressed as a vital component of the library and information industry. The theme for Australian Library Week 'Libraries: Here for the long run' is relevant to library technicians who are also here for the long run. A very special thank you to all of those who have encouraged and supported us throughout the years to our coming of age. ■

Brisbane-based library technicians celebrate at the Coffee Club



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