

Trainee program enhances collection management in Central Australia

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A number of organisations in the Alice Springs community have collaborated to support a Collection Management Traineeship program. The Certificate II Library/Information Services and the Certificate II Museum Practice and Industry Training Package will form the basis of this program. The course will be presented in Alice Springs by local Registered Training Organisation, Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education (BIITE), for six participating Indigenous trainees.

This exciting program was initiated after discussions between Northern Territory Library and Information Services (NTLIS) and BIITE. Participating organisations are Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association (CAAMA), Desert Gallery, Araluen Cultural Precinct, Central Land Council (CLC), Alice Springs Public Library (ASPL) and BIITE. Each of these organisations share the need for professional collection management, whether they be collections of books, videos, tape-recordings, artworks or museum items. Training will be both on- and off-the-job, with group sessions and assessment being the responsibility of BIITE. Batchelor Institute has been playing a significant role in the delivery of education courses to Indigenous people in the Northern Territory for the past thirty years, offering courses through schools of education, health, community studies, and a community education and training division.

In time, it is intended that training be extended to meet the needs of people in remote Aboriginal communities in Central Australia, where there is considerable interest in the development of 'Indigenous knowledge centres' which incorporate local collections and information services, in addition to western knowledge collections. The intention is to increase access to information for people living in remote communities. NTLIS has been active in working with communities in the Top End and is extending the



Collection management trainees (l-r) Ali Cobby-Eckermann, Tanith Glynn, Kelli Lea Williams and Chyree Mail

work to communities in Central Australia. Together they have developed the concept of 'Indigenous knowledge centres'. A research project to develop a model is about to commence.

Initially, the National Library of Australia and ALIA contributed funds for an information and recruitment session held in the Desert Gallery in November last year. Collections of typical materials were set up by the participating organisations, which displayed the diversity of collections held in Alice Springs. The Traineeship program is being funded jointly by the Department of Employment, Workplace Relations and Small Business (DEWRSB), Northern Territory and Training Authority (NTETA) and the participating organisations, and it will be administered by Group Training Northern Territory.

The Traineeship will allow students to progress through their studies at their own rate, and will prepare them for employment within the industry or to continue study at a more advanced level. The program will commence mid-April 2001. ■

Volunteers — expressions of interest

The Voluntary Service to Indigenous Communities Foundation is an independent organisation set up in May 2000 to fill a gap in services in Indigenous communities. Its aim is to improve the access of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to business, trade and professional skills.

The Foundation provides Indigenous communities with access to the skills and expertise they need to pursue community goals by finding volunteers with matching skills. Volunteers transfer their skills direct to communities. Projects may be in urban, rural or remote communities anywhere in Australia and may range from one week to three months. Basic costs for volunteers are covered.

People interested in working as a volunteer in an Indigenous community can call the Foundation's toll free infoline — 1800 819 542 — to register their interest, talk about the possibilities and get an information kit (including application form).

All kinds of skills are needed in Indigenous communities — we currently have projects requiring skills in business planning and submissions, management, marketing and communication, office and bookkeeping systems, IT and horticulture. We are recruiting volunteers now, so if you have skills in these areas and can give some of your time, please call us. Alternatively you can fax us on 02 6121 6185 or e-mail volindigenous@bigpond.com. ■