

# Embracing conference connections

The 12<sup>th</sup> ALIA library technicians' conference will take place in Brisbane in September 2003 and all library technicians and assistants are invited. Conferences such as these are exciting and stimulating and should instil a sense of pride in what can be achieved.

Tuesday 9 September 2003 is the starting point and this day is devoted to pre-conference activities and networking opportunities. It is beneficial to identify your state peers and forge friendships as the conference progresses. I hope to catch up with the Monash technicians who may appreciate the Brisbane sunshine after dealing with recent tragic events and the long-term effects on their clientele.

Previous conferences have provided many highlights. Who could forget Grant Stone and his excellent presentation on laughter yoga which had delegates shake, groove and grumble, at 9:00am, even those still under the influence of the conference dinner. A light finale to the 11<sup>th</sup> ALIA Library Technicians' conference held in Tasmania in 2001.

Perhaps you were more impressed by Jennefer Nicholson's presentation at the 10<sup>th</sup> ALIA Library Technicians conference in Western Australia covering the history and professional development of library technicians within ALIA.

An excellent way to express that pride and professionalism is to support awards that are special to library technicians. The library technician of the year award was founded in 1988 and was first awarded in 1989 to promote the role and image of library technicians. It has since been awarded to seven library technicians and this conference should attract a strong field of

nominees.

The Dunn and Wilson scholarship is also available and aims to provide a library technician with support to investigate a particular project relating to the practice of library technicians. The 2001 recipient Meredith Martinelli reported her success at the Tasmanian conference immediately prior to an appendectomy — no Meredith it wasn't nerves! These people were conference presenters who opened their minds to new goals, set, achieved and shared the joy through the conference experience.

Conferences provide opportunity to be recognised for outstanding awards and to meet people from all walks of life in similar industry employment. The diversity of modern libraries is always highlighted at conferences as peers provide insight into both history and advancement of print and storage. In one corner we have discussions of micro-fiche and paper acidity while the other corner is hypertext links and digital imaging.

Accepting the differences and collectively contributing to Australia's history is the shared goal of this profession so let's embrace reality together. If you survive on a minimum budget save your pennies for this conference. A wide range of professional and personal development opportunities are available so hone your negotiation skills and put Brisbane 2003 in your budget. See you there.

*Amanda Rosemary Hill, QUT Library Technician*



**Bridging Services**  
embracing reality

12<sup>th</sup> ALIA NATIONAL LIBRARY TECHNICIANS CONFERENCE

## Heeding the call for papers

Industry conferences provide professional development opportunities on a grand scale. The experience of contributing to our industry is enormously beneficial.

Why go to a conference in the first place? You may find that you literally network, discuss and debate with colleagues from across the industry, country, and possibly the world. Going to a conference is not just about listening to speakers and attending the cocktail hour. You add value to your conference experience by taking the opportunity to investigate with suppliers and associated industries, attend workshops and meetings, or present a paper. These opportunities provide you with a valuable experience to take back to your organisation.

Why present a paper? A very personal and challenging experience is that of presenting. Not only does it provide you with the challenge of using a variety of communication skills (written, verbal, public presenting) to write the initial submission, but it also is the ideal way to contribute to your organisation and your personal skills. As a side issue, but an outcome of my personal experience, presenting a paper also has the potential to advance your career or earn a better income.

### My experience

The first library conference I attended was the 10<sup>th</sup> ALIA Technician conference in Fremantle in 1999. In the twelve months after Perth, I found that I was involved in projects and business, which required great communication and leadership skills. These sorts of opportunities were greatly enhanced when I seized the moment by submitting an abstract for a paper. I knew it was the perfect opportunity to examine my environment, or issues, to share and contribute ideas, investigations, and present the results.

It was the first time I had attempted an exercise of this scale within my profession, and yes, at times it was daunting. I knew that my thoughts and experiences were valuable to others in the industry, and my paper might give others the confidence they need in their roles within TAFE, or other areas of the library industry.

### The rewards

I was able to add an impressive item to my CV! Having my paper accepted was indeed an honour, and I found that the experience provided me with an enhanced range of skills, which I have used many times over for my library.

Most importantly, preparing a paper



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adds to the library industry. Preparing something of value proves that there are technicians who are industry active, caring and prepared to contribute to the development process of the information environment. I encourage other library technicians to consider presenting a paper at the Library Technician's conference in Brisbane in September 2003. If you have an idea or something to contribute, please see the website at <http://www.alia.org.au/groups/libtntat/conferences/2003/call.for.papers.html> or e-mail [vanessa@orgaus.com.au](mailto:vanessa@orgaus.com.au) for a brochure.

Now is the time to take the leap!

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