

Top ten reasons to...



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I am just back from an amazing day at the 7th Aurora Library Leadership Institute, at the Thredbo Alpine Resort. It was a privilege to attend and to watch our emerging leaders challenge themselves and each other about leadership and what it means to them. John Shannon and Becky Schreiber continue to provide wise guidance and counsel, and offer many opportunities for participants to take risks in a supportive environment.

There are now around 240 alumni of Aurora and it is getting to be a critical mass of young professionals with a better-developed idea of themselves and where they want to take their careers. I know that many of the participants continue their contact with their groups, and this will prove to be a great source of support to them as they climb the sometimes-slippery ladder of success.

Aurora also offers the opportunity to get to know our cousins across the ditch better too, and it was great to meet Mirla Edmundson, the LIANZA president who was one of the mentors. There were a number of New Zealand participants and it was good to have this wider perspective.

Of course, Warren Horton was a major supporter of Aurora, and his presence was greatly missed.

It was quite an experience coming down off the mountain early in the morning and looking at the trees recovering from the bushfires. Driving down to Jindabyne with the morning mist over the lake was just magic, and very good for the soul.

While I was there, I was challenged by participants as to why they should join ALIA, and why they shouldn't form another group that better represents their interests. So I have come up with the *Top ten reasons to join ALIA*.

- 1 Eleven editions of this august journal, brimful of news, features, editorials and events — *inCite*.
- 2 Discounts on courses and conferences — you could easily break even in one year if you went to a couple of ALIA conferences and events.
- 3 Tradition — hey, we've been going since 1937, and we are proud of that.
- 4 Continuing professional development — new courses, new brokered deals with providers, and the chance to get another bit of the alphabet by your nominals — be an AFALIA — that *is* impressive.
- 5 We need someone to keep the government honest on copyright and to fight for what we think is fair and reasonable for our communities.
- 6 Networks and friendships — some of my best friends are AALIAs and I even know some FALIAs.

- 7 Famous people belong — like state librarians and university librarians and maybe your boss.
- 8 There is an ace website to visit to find all sorts of information, and all the best bits are for members only.
- 9 You could win an award — for being really excellent or win a scholarship to travel the world.
- 10 It lets you put AALIA or ALIATec after your name (looks great on your business card and your CV).

And there are so many reasons, I need to put in one last one — you can form a group of like minded souls and register with ALIA and you then have all the resources of the National Office staff, who are truly lovely people, at your disposal. It's just so easy to be a group now — the website will tell you that 'ALIA Groups have a geographic, special interest, special purpose, issue or sectoral basis, have the support of (or serve) at least 25 members of the Association, and are endorsed by the Board of Directors. A group may be established for a short period (for example for a specific purpose, issue or activity) or for up to two years to fulfil a longer-term purpose or need. A geographic location need not be limited to state borders.'

I would also like to challenge the more-mature members of our association to take a more active role in ALIA. When I was young, it was a real 'status thing' to be on an ALIA committee, because there were a lot of library managers who held executive positions and it was a good place to meet the leaders of the profession. I think that we are letting down the younger members by not participating more in local groups and providing a mentoring role for them. I know that a lot of people feel like they have done their bit, but as one of the people at the National Policy Congress said, she had got her second wind and was revitalised — and some of that energy of the younger ones is bound to rub off on you!

I also attended the VALA conference in Melbourne in February. There was a real buzz about the conference that a number of people commented on. There were many interesting papers and a great trade exhibition. Hot topics were scholarly communication and intellectual rights; co-operatives and consortia; and managing digital objects. Hot trade trends were RFID and self-service; some fancy products like a classical music online database; and the yummy smoothies being cheerfully produced by a nice young man on a bicycle.

Lots of work is going on for the ALIA 2004 conference on the Gold Coast in September too, so keep your eye out for details of registration which will commence on 1 March. ■

Feedback to your Board of Directors

Do you have an idea, compliment or concern about your Association? Contact any director and ideas will be reviewed at each Board meeting.

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