

Careers

@ your library

Brisbane Careers and Employment Expo, Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre, Friday 20 – Sunday 22 April 2007.

For the second year running, ALIA hosted the 'careers @ your library' stand at the Brisbane Careers and Employment Expo (<http://www.eocexpo.com.au/15statebystate03.html>). As one of 155 exhibitors, we competed with such diverse organisations as international mining companies and the latest fad (health drink producers) to attract the best and brightest to our profession.

The ALIA Quorum group hosted the stand to attract young school-leavers and career-changers to the profession, educating the public about the diversity and richness of the industry and to address misconceptions about the library and information profession and its people. Not one of the volunteers was sporting a bun or twinsset.

For three days volunteer librarians, teacher-librarians, library technicians, library educators and records managers handed out information and advice on getting started in a career in libraries and information, along with balloons, posters and bookmarks. For most it was a very positive experience, despite some sore feet at the end of a shift. Our volunteers reported that they enjoyed chatting to genuinely interested people about the diversity of LIS courses and careers, meeting other people who love libraries and getting to know their fellow volunteers from different library and information sectors.

In between dispensing wisdom, the volunteers enjoyed free massages and coffee in the exhibitors business lounge and checked out the other exhibitors. My children came away with an embarrassing wealth of lollies, pens and frisbees gathered from other stands, but my personal favourite was the fresh coffee prepared at one of the many fast-food

company stands.

Last year the expo attracted around 35 000 people – the largest turnout in any state – with a similar estimate this year. While the crowds seemed to thin dramatically towards the end of day three last year, we were amazed this year at the number of people still appearing at the stall as the final minutes ticked by.

Of the people who visited our stand:

- two-thirds were mature-aged and one-third school students.
- roughly half of the enquiries concerned courses in library and information, the other half vocational information.
- All of volunteers who filled out their evaluation sheets reported that they had made a difference to someone by talking to them about career paths, and that they thought it was worth promoting careers @ your library through the Careers and Employment Expo.

ALIA appreciated the contribution of industry partners, including the State Library of Queensland, QUT's Faculty of Information Technology, QUT's Faculty of Education, the Records Management Association of Australasia QLD, QULOC, the School Library Association of Queensland Inc. and Raeco.

But most of all we would like to acknowledge the support of our volunteers who, through their presence, painted a picture of library and information workers as confident, well educated, interesting and engaging men and women.

If you would like to find out more about careers @ your library, check out the qualifications and careers area of the ALIA website at <http://www.alia.org.au/education/careers.html>.

Claudia Davies

ALIA Qld Local Liaison Officer

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