Kate Watson

ALIA Director

RUBRIC Coordinator
University of the Sunshine Coast
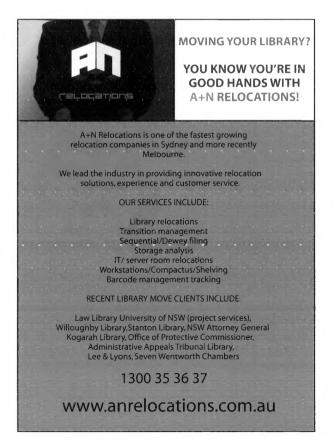kate.watson@alia.org.au

Boarderline

This month we introduce what will hopefully become a regular feature of inCite. 'Boarderline' complements 'Frontline' and 'Directline' by giving a voice to an ALIA Board member. This month, Kate Watson ponders library activities not taking place in the confines of library buildings.

Library spaces without walls

Working in teams is common practice for many ALIA members and LIS practitioners around the country. Many of these library teams have the pleasure of working in beautiful buildings and spaces. Whether you call them libraries, information centres, technology hubs, or learning commons, there are a number of beautiful buildings around the country where this 'library thing' takes place.

Recently on the ALIA NewGrads e-list, Gemma Siemensma kicked off an online discussion with a link to a website highlighting some 'beautiful library buildings' around the world. New Grads commented on the Australian libraries included in this list, and added a number of other Australian libraries they felt were 'beautiful' and should have been included in the list.

While I have been lucky enough to work in a number of amazing buildings and spaces, I am currently working with a library team in a building that is as good as they get. The University of the Sunshine Coast (USC) Library is a sensational library space — see <**http://www.usc.edu.au/University/Library/About/Building/**>. Officially opened in November 1997, the design of the building has won numerous design accolades, including the 1997 Sir Zelman Cowen Award for Public Buildings, the top annual award for architectural excellence by the Royal Australian Institute of

Architects. The USC Library Team are all based in this building, with work areas boasting natural light, high ceilings and creative use of colour.

But what about library teams that do not work in the one building or space? There are a number of library teams working collaboratively together despite distance. Examples of these include:

- library teams with multiple campuses, such as Central Queensland University Libraries with nine campus libraries in three states — <**http://www.library.cqu.edu.au/visit/location/index.htm**>.

- cross-organisational teams, such as the RUBRIC Project team, with partners in five Australian states and in New Zealand — <**http://rubric.edu.au/**>.

- conference organising committees, such as the NLS4 Conference Committee with representatives from four states and territories — <**http://conferences.alia.org.au/newlibrarian2008/committee.html**>.

- and even the current ALIA Board of Directors (with representatives from six states and territories).

These 'virtual' teams do not have the luxury of working together on a day-to-day basis in the one library space. This usually means no daily face-to-face meetings, no hiking it over to a colleague's desk for discussion, and no incidental communication that comes with passing one another in the stairwell, casual conversations in the tea room, and social activities after work. These teams have to find other ways to work, collaborate and communicate — more often than not this means online communication using online spaces.

ALIA is engaged in discovering what members want in regards to technology and online spaces for communication. As part of the 2007 National Advisory Congress meetings, members are being asked to brainstorm and let ALIA know their needs and ideas in this area. If you have suggestions on how ALIA can provide online spaces to do our 'library thing' in, please email me your suggestions. Maybe soon we will be sharing via elists lists of 'beautiful online library spaces'.

The world's most beautiful library buildings

Doing the rounds on the aliaNEWGRAD e-list is a link to a website with a stunning collection of images. It features some remarkably beautiful libraries from around the world. And Australia's State Library of Victoria is included. Check it out at <**http://www.curiousexpeditions.org/2007/09/a_librophiliacs_love_letter_1.html**> or simply key 'world's most beautiful libraries' as a phrase in your browser search engine.