

Making the most of opportunities

In May 2007 I began working as the inaugural librarian at the Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre. AUSTRAC is Australia's anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing regulator and specialist financial intelligence unit (FIU).

In any newly created position, there is a need to demonstrate a well developed ability to contribute to strategic thinking and adopt relevant approaches in order to make the library and research centre a viable, ongoing operation. For instance, you need to establish an online library management system, link the system to the intranet, investigate and subscribe to online databases and journals, carry out a staff audit of needs, promote the database system and train staff in its use.

Moreover, you need to be acutely aware that emphasis needs to be placed on the ongoing promotion of online library services, to tailor systems as needs change and to establish an effective research strategy.

It is imperative to innovate, collaborate, and share your ideas with your colleagues, and not be afraid to implement new services for your clients. Innovations I have implemented at AUSTRAC include an XML newsfeed, which is a prominent feature on the front page of the intranet. The scrolling format is a great way to draw attention back to the 'Media Watch' column, and helps establish the value of this information dissemination tool. In terms of adding a new dynamic to a corporate intranet, it has been most effective.

After hearing so much about the Aurora Leadership Institute, I decided to apply for the Australian Government Library and Information Network (AGLIN) scholarship for 2008. AGLIN is an independent organisation formally established in 1993 to coordinate Commonwealth government libraries.

I was selected as the recipient of the AGLIN Aurora Scholarship for 2008 and attended the 11th Aurora Leadership Institute at Thredbo in February, along with 31 other participants from Australian and New Zealand. This win was a particular honour, given it was the first time the scholarship was offered. As a result of winning this scholarship, I am now a member of AGLIN's executive board.

The Aurora Leadership Institute assists future leaders in the library and information sector to maximise their skills and potential. This is not a conference or seminar; it is an 'experience' and an adventure.

It is difficult to describe the Aurora 'experience'... it was fun, stressful, enlightening, challenging, extremely tiring and more. The benefits for me included self awareness and exploration, as well as the chance to meet and learn from inspirational peers and mentors from differing backgrounds, while also to spending time with and learning from leaders in the information management profession.

My mentors included Sue Hutley from ALIA, and Anne-Marie Schwirtlich, CEO & State Librarian from the State Library of Victoria. I learnt so much from Sue and Anne-Marie: both were supportive, encouraging and I am so grateful to have met them.

As other info pros have been saying for a long time, just because you have the label 'librarian', it doesn't mean you shelve and read books for most of your day. Librarians have exceptional research and searching skills, often not recognised by the wider community. Our skills sets are very transferable and it's great to know that government agencies are increasingly becoming more strategic in their approach to professional development within human resource management.

Finally, if you haven't been to Aurora - why don't you apply for 2009? The impact is difficult to put into words, you need to experience Aurora yourself to comprehend the effect on your life and your career. Likewise, I encourage librarians and information professionals to consider applying for a range of professional development opportunities, even though they may not be directly library-related. You never know what may eventuate as a result!

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Professional Development opportunities and date claimers for October

ALIA/CAVAL - *Disaster Planning for Cultural Collections*

Queensland: QUT: Carseldine Campus, Wed October 1, 2008. ALIA members receive special discount price

To register contact CAVAL Training

training@caval.edu.au

PD Scheme points = 5 [Informal learning]

ALIA/ARK - *Maximising the Value of Internal Communication*. 23 - 24 October 2008: Perth

<http://www.arkgroupaustralia.com.au/events.htm>

One FREE registration available to an ALIA member:

apply at <http://www.alia.org.au/education/pd/>

PD Scheme points = 15 [Informal Learning]

ALIA/Resource Options - *Answering Selection Criteria and Perfecting Interviews*. Workshop series presented by Jenny Hale. Coming to Sydney, Adelaide, Hobart and Canberra. More information coming soon.

PD Scheme points = to be advised

ALIA/SCHARR - *Project Management (PM@5pm)*

Last FOLIOz course for 2008. Starts in October.

Registrations open soon.

PD Scheme points = 60 [Tertiary courses]

For more information on these and other PD opportunities go to

<http://www.alia.org.au/education/pd/>

or contact ALIA PD Officer

pd@alia.org.au