Conferences

RAILS 6: Promoting research in the profession

RAILS 6 (Research Applications in Library Science) is being organised by the School of Information Studies, Charles Sturt University, and will be held on the Canberra Campus (The Australian Centre for Culture and Christianity) on Friday, 22 January 2010. For educators, there will also be a day-long meeting prior to the conference on Thursday 21 January, to be held at CSU Canberra Campus. Presenters have the option to present a short paper (15 min) or a full paper (25 min). All full papers will be peer reviewed and published in *Australian Academic & Research Libraries* in 2010. Further information and registration details ($100 for the day) are available on the CSU website **http://www.csu.edu.au/faculty/educat/sis/RAILS6.html**

QPLA and PLA partnered at Annual Conference

**11-14 October 2009
Jupiters Townsville
Hotel and Casino**

Change and challenge was the theme of the Queensland Public Libraries Association (QPLA) and Public Libraries Australia (PLA) conference held in Townsville from 11–14 October. The conference was also supported by ALIA.

The theme and the logo resonated with many delegates, particularly those from Queensland where local government amalgamations have recently taken place. For the first time, QPLA partnered with PLA in offering their annual conference. The result was an excellent, engaging program enjoyed by more than 100 delegates and speakers from all across Australia, and 40 trade delegates.

The theme, change and challenge, was reflected in the conference program each day. Monday's theme was change and challenge in the use of technology in public libraries. The keynote speaker was Dr Michael Stephens, CAVAL visiting scholar for 2009. Michael is a lecturer at Dominican University, near Chicago, and a regular contributor to *Library Journal*. Michael's address, *The hyper-linked public library in times of change and challenge*, reflected his current interest in the use of web 2.0 tools in libraries. A forum session followed, featuring practitioners in public libraries. They looked at some of the barriers that institutions sometimes put in the way of innovatory technological applications in public libraries and what initiatives staff can take to create environments conducive to change.

Change and challenge in the demographic landscape was the theme for Tuesday. Bernard Salt, respected commentator on consumer, cultural, and demographic trends, kept the audience engaged as he highlighted at a national level the changes in Australia's demographics, most notably the shift to the cities on the eastern seaboard, and the likely impact this will have on communities and the provision of community services, interspersed with some humorous insights into generational differences. The forum which followed featured a panel of senior library personnel – Warwick Cathro, Assistant Director-General, National Library of Australia, Anne-Marie Schwirtlich, CEO and State Librarian, State Library of Victoria, Mary Teague, Director, Public and Indigenous Library Services, State Library of Queensland, and Jan Richards, ALIA President. Each discussed the challenges and opportunities as public libraries respond to change.

The theme on the final day was about social inclusion, the changing role of public libraries, and the challenges in responding. Keynote speaker for the day was Noel Pearson, the influential Australian Aboriginal lawyer and land rights activist. His address touched on the theme of social inclusion of the Indigenous population and his own vision for the advancement of his people. Ways in which public libraries are responding to social inclusion and becoming vehicles for community development, particularly in the area of multiculturalism, were presented in the forum session which followed.

Each day followed a similar pattern. Monday and Tuesday afternoons provided short, concurrent sessions also related to the theme of change and challenge – technology, future trends in society, and social inclusion. Delegates were able to choose from a broad range of presentations covering early literacy, digitisation projects, culture change in organisations, using technologies to change service delivery, and community development projects.

No library conference would be complete without the social functions. Townsville turned on beautiful weather, very warm during the day, followed by balmy evenings. At the conference dinner 155 guests enjoyed a lovely meal and danced the night away. In keeping with the logo, each table was challenged to create origami fish. It was interesting to watch CEOs, councillors, speakers, and presidents of library associations testing out their origami skills. It turned out to be an activity for early in the evening – rather too complicated after some wine had been consumed. The evenin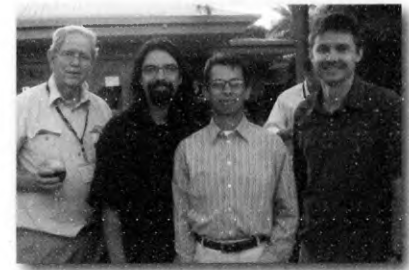g also saw the presentation of the QPLA awards for 2009. Rockhampton Regional Council was awarded local government of the year, the award for public library of the year went to Sunshine Coast library service, and Isaac Regional Council library service took out the public library achievement award.

A challenge in Origami

A jazz trio provided the backdrop to the barbecue held at Riverway on Tuesday night. Guests could stroll along the Ross River, admire the photography exhibition, and enjoy the ambiance of the swimming lagoons in an informal, relaxed setting beside the pool.

Library tours were offered on Wednesday afternoon and three enthusiastic groups set off, ably escorted by staff from CityLibraries Townsville, visiting Townsville's public library branches, James Cook University's North Queensland collection, and the Community Information Centre.

*Ron Store, Michael Stephens
Steve Hoggatt and
Warren Cheetham enjoy a balmy
Sunday afternoon at the trade
exhibition launch*

At his official opening of and welcome to the conference the Mayor of Townsville, Alderman Les Tyrell, reminded delegates:

Working in a library is a great responsibility but it also provides great opportunities. You are given the opportunity to transform people's lives through the services you offer and you provide an inclusive place where age, religion, race, capability, and gender do not matter.

He went on to challenge delegates to work economically and nimbly if we are going to respond successfully to the challenges and changes before us. The presentations at this conference will help us to navigate a future pathway and to manage them more successfully.

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ALIA 2009 National Library & Information Technicians Conference

15-18 September 2009

Technology Technique 09 Unique ADELAIDE

Delegates attending the recent 2009 National Library & Information Technicians Conference at the multi-award winning Adelaide Convention Centre enjoyed five days of networking and learning opportunities. The conference theme, *Technology, Technique, Unique*, provided a framework for a program that challenged ideas, generated discussion, and, the organisers believe, promoted new thinking.

The pre-conference program commenced on the Monday with satellite events, a Leadership Workshop for technicians, and an Acquisition Continuum. Tuesday offered a full day of library tours of best practice sites, including tours of school, public, academic, legal, special libraries, and archives. The Welcome Cocktail Party, in the evening, gave delegates the opportunity to explore the Trade Exhibition, catch up with old friends, and to develop new networking contacts. After enjoying South Australian wines, fine food, and gentle entertainment by classically trained singer Bella Jedrzejczak, it was time to move on to dinner. First time delegates made themselves known to other first timers over a relaxing, informal dinner at the conveniently located Quiet Waters Lebanese restaurant.

Keynote Speaker Elaina Norlin with Organising Committee
L to R Jo, Robyn, Elaina (back), Juliet (front), Terri, and Kath

After a warm Adelaide night, light rain welcomed guests, delegates, speakers, and exhibitors to the first day's proceedings. Opening keynote speaker Irena Yashin-Shaw had been advertised as the 'pocket dynamo' and she did not disappoint. An accomplished and award winning professional speaker, Irena delivered an empowering speech using humour to demonstrate how mastering some basic principles can transform an individual's sense of personal power.

Energised, motivated, and eager delegates proceeded to enjoy a full day's program offering a range of choice. Prominent industry speakers explored topics such as cyber safety, web 2.0 issues, and career skills. Established library technicians presented papers, sharing their experiences of interesting and informative events and issues encountered in their workplace. Experienced presenters encouraged participation in workshops designed to inform, inspire, and incite discussion.

International keynote speaker and author, Elaina Norlin presented a thought provoking opening speech on day two when she discussed the findings of a survey revealing 'the public's understanding of libraries and technology'. Day two also saw the Dunn & Wilson Oration, presented by Rebecca Evans, and the presentation of the ALIA Library Technician Research Award (formerly the Dunn & Wilson) and Library Technician of the Year Award. Rebecca's presentation explored the history of library technicians, a wonderful acknowledgement of the technicians' thirty year anniversary **http://2007-dunn-and-wilson.wikispaces. com/**. The ALIA Library Technician Research Award 2009, sponsored by Charles Sturt University, was awarded to Janette Telford, and Trish D'Arcy received the Library Technician of the Year Award, sponsored by the School of Computer and Information Science at Edith Cowan University. Congratulations Janette and Trish.

The enthusiastic atmosphere continued into the evening with delegates travelling a short distance to the National Wine Centre for the conference dinner. In keeping with the 'thirty years' theme guests were invited to dress in their favourite retro outfit. Congratulations to best dressed winner, John Geijsman for his John Travolta impersonation, and to runner up, Jennifer Willis. Her delightful outfit was hand made from a 1970s Vogue Original Pattern and accessorised with a 1970's shawl, bag, and beads. Local band the Smarty Boys provided the entertainment, while guests danced and enjoyed a delicious three course menu featuring South Australian food and wines.

Still energised, on the final day of the conference, the delegates filled the house to hear Carol Cooper deliver the keynote speech in which she identified personal responsibility, ownership, and accountability as keys to happiness and success. The program continued with industry experts Ian McDonald and Helen Roberts discussing copyright issues and then later, as in previous days, delegates were offered options including attending workshops, panel sessions, or paper presentations. The afternoon plenary sessions discussed various aspects of education for library technicians. ALIA Vice President Graham Black delivered the closing remarks, acknowledging and thanking the organising committee for their contribution to a successful conference. After a presentation by the Perth 2011 committee, local comedian Jason Chong, using his unique style of humour, bade delegates farewell to Adelaide. Then it was time to enjoy a final drink, exchange the last of the business cards, and deliver the promise to 'see you in Perth in 2011'.

A successful national conference depends on the hard work, generosity, contributions, and professionalism of a number of people over many, many months. I would like to acknowledge and thank the organising committee, Team Adelaide 2009, Juliet Giustozzi, Jo Corbett, Kath McCulloch, and Robyn Nagel for their dedication. Thank you also to Merilyn Dayman and Candice Sferco from All Occasions Management, staff at ALIA Head Office, Kamara Schlegel and Jane Hardy, also Jeannine Hooper, ALIA South Australian Local Liaison Officer.

A sincere thank you to all sponsors, exhibitors, presenters, keynote and invited speakers, and, of course, the delegates. Without everyone's contribution, this conference would not have been possible. A heartfelt thank you to all.

The full conference program and papers can be viewed on the conference web page **http://conferences.alia.org.au/libtec2009** .

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ALIA Vice-President Graham Black delivering closing remarks