

## All about ALIA RAIS Victoria

Confession time: I didn't join ALIA for over a decade.

Sort of shameful, sort of not. See, I worked for a public library service for a number of years where many of my and my workplace's goals were met through professional and strategic goals in-house. But then I left. And I was lost for a little while, especially since I began to work freelance and in smaller libraries that might not have the resources to concentrate on staff development – or else as a short-term contractor, development wasn't part of the deal. Fair enough. But then I saw what an ALIA group could do for me and how I could contribute to the profession, first as a general committee member, then secretary, and now convenor.

Almost all libraries have some form of reference and technical services. These two strands seem to define a library as opposed to, say, a book store. ALIA RAIS Victoria is a Melbourne-based group that focuses on Reference and Information Services. Sure, there'll always be detractors, pointing out that reference is in a death spiral and would it hurry up and keel over already? Would reference stop rising up in different phoenix forms? Roving, chat, SMS, e-mail, traditional, and telekinesis for all I know. Depending on where you work, reference might be more self-service than ten years ago, but no doubt it exists in some form. And since reference exists, RAIS exists to take a relaxed look at different professional practices that could help in your workplace and in your career.

ALIA RAIS Victoria is a small committee that looks at the different types of reference services from a LIS worker's perspective. The group has members in the academic, special, public, and volunteer sectors, and presents one to two panel

events after work each year. Sessions held have included Raises, Roadblocks & Realities: Training & Career Progression which in part had public library speakers demonstrate a reference training wiki. Other events have included Making over the Reference Desk, Marketing, and How To Work In Libraries Overseas. Our October 2010 session Getting Started from Scratch, about how to begin or introduce new reference services and collections from those who have done it is being finalised.

One of the joys of the group is the face-to-face, local factor. Admittedly a lot of organising happens via e-mail and the occasional telephone call, but there are a few in-person meetings to brainstorm ideas for events, along with the events themselves. The time commitment is not onerous. That the committee members are from different sectors and at different career stages helps to develop a wide network of contacts.

The group welcomes and encourages new members – new graduate, mid-career, library director, student, volunteer – all those interested in reference are welcome, across all sectors. Contact me via e-mail if you'd like to be part of the RAIS committee.

Confession time: ALIA RAIS is a whole lot of fun, even though it's good for you. Good for both personal professional development and building the association.

PS. Reference is not dead.

**Doreen Sullivan**

ALIA RAIS (Vic.) Convenor

doreensullivan@bigpond.com

<http://www.alia.org.au/groups/raisvic/>

## ALIA Public Sector Information Advisory Committee

How do you find government information? How do you subscribe to the new e-list? What are the current issues about access to public sector information? The ALIA Public Sector Information Advisory Committee is pleased to announce that our new issues and advocacy page, and new e-list, are now available at <http://www.alia.org.au/advocacy/publications.government.html> or follow the link from the main Advocacy page.

This Committee provides advice and guidelines on public sector information and government publications to the ALIA Board of Directors and focuses attention on Australian public sector government information, at federal, state and local level.

The current members of the Committee are: Roxanne Missingham (convenor), Elizabeth Drynan, Cheryl Grant, Kym Holden, Sue Little, and Donna Priddle.

In 2010 the committee will focus on:

- continuing to raise the issue of the importance of access to public sector information (including long term access)
- continuing issues in the supply of printed materials
- the importance of access online to parliamentary papers
- how ALIA might support greater accessibility of government information and publications
- how ALIA might provide advice to the Information Commissioner
- coordination with state government library groups, hoping for a teleconference with these groups later in the year
- an initiative to recognise good developments in access to public sector information.

The new issues and advocacy page for public sector information includes sections on current issues, how to find government information, e-list subscription details, and relevant ALIA policies and submissions.

There is now a new ALIA e-list called aliaOZGOVPUBS which is maintained by the ALIA Public Sector Information Advisory Committee and is for anyone interested in government documents in Australian libraries. We are very grateful to Monash University for supporting the list oz-govpubs-l and we thank them for supporting those interested in government publications and information. The new ALIA list will replace oz-govpubs-l.

**Roxanne Missingham**

Chair, ALIA Public Sector Information Advisory Committee

roxanne.missingham@aph.gov.au

