

FELLOWSHIP WINNER LOOKS FOR ANSWERS

Jane Shelling's team at the National Drugs Sector Information Service (NDSIS) of the Alcohol and other Drugs Information Service (ADCA) identify and disseminate evidence to support those working to prevent or reduce the harms caused by alcohol and other drugs. Their research over many years showed they had a group of clients that weren't taking up the professional literature and they wanted to know why. An ALIA Professional Development posting motivated Jane to apply for a Churchill Fellowship to find some answers.

The purpose of my Churchill Fellowship was to assess methods for providing professional information to community based alcohol and other drugs (AOD) workers. I travelled to the USA, Canada and England to meet with and interview librarians, policy writers, researchers, academics, and AOD workers from specialist libraries, government departments, non-government organisations, and universities. I also attended two conferences, the first in Kansas City USA (the Substance Abuse Librarians and Information Specialist Conference), and the second in Manchester England (Evidence Based Library and Information Professionals Conference).

With every contact made I gained insight into individual views on working in the AOD field, issues related to local AOD workforces and specific information dissemination practices. I also raised specific questions about the factors that made AOD workers more receptive to receiving professional information, the type of information that should be disseminated and the form it should take, the

specific dissemination methods that work best, how to assure dissemination best practice and finally, how do libraries fit into knowledge translation?

The response I received from all of the professionals I visited was welcoming and helpful, ensuring my trip was a great success. In particular the librarians from the Substance Abuse Librarians and Information Specialists (SALIS) group were very generous in sharing their expertise, networks, contacts and organisations with me.

A very full itinerary included highlights such as visiting the huge American institutions of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and the National Library of Medicine, both impressive for their range of resources and magnitude of information reach. My itinerary also included the Alcohol Centre, Rutgers University in New Jersey, White Squirrel Way, Toronto's largest mental health and addiction facility and the International Centre for Drug Policy at St. George's Hospital in London.

My Fellowship helped me to find a way to improve an information service to a deserving part of the Australian workforce and reinvigorated my passion for librarianship. I established important overseas connections and a new Australian network of Churchill Fellows and increased my confidence in my ability to make change. I highly recommend the Churchill Fellowship scheme to all.

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