



WE ARE FAMILY

WELCOME TO THE ALIA NEW GRADUATES GROUP

I was volunteering as a school librarian in Vanuatu when Andrew Finegan (Group Convener 2008–2010) first asked me to be the Secretary of the ALIA New Graduates Group. I had a bit of free time between teaching classes and sweeping lizard eggs off the bookshelves, so I agreed to help out... and I am so glad I did.

For those who don't know (and I certainly didn't) the ALIA New Graduates Group was an initiative of the New Generation Policy and Advisory Group (replaced by the New Generation Advisory Committee, aka NGAC). The New Graduates Group was set up in 2003, led by Alison O'Connor (Convener) and Kate Watson (Secretary) (<http://archive.alia.org.au/incite/2003/07/new.graduates.html>).

We now have Regional Coordinators in New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia, Tasmania and Victoria, and we are always looking for more volunteers. We work closely with the New Generation Advisory Committee, but its role is a bit different from ours, and this can sometimes be confusing for newbies. To explain briefly, NGAC members are appointed by the ALIA Board to give advice on issues pertaining to new graduates and students. Current projects include the development of an EOI for the New Librarians' Symposium 2015 and a survey of new graduates and students for the Association (read all about NGAC here: www.alia.org.au/NGAC).

How are we different? The official goals of the ALIA New Graduates Group are to:

- Facilitate networking
- Provide a forum for discussion
- Offer training
- Introduce new graduates to the ALIA community.

But that's all business-speak! What's our real aim? We want to create a supportive and welcoming family for all the new graduates out there. You are a new librarian. It's going to be hard sometimes, but you are not alone. Come and join the gang (online or IRL).

After supporting Andrew Finegan, I assisted Melanie Chivers (Group Convener 2011-2012), and I now report to Hiba Kanj, who balances her Convener role with her work as a Children and Youth Services Librarian. Hiba has also just revealed that she will be convening the New Graduates' stream of the ALIA National Conference in 2014. This is an amazing opportunity and just the sort of thing that being part of the New Grads Group seems to lead to. Good luck, Hiba!

So, what does the Convener have to say about the Group? Hiba says, 'The New Graduates Group is an eclectic group with enthusiastic coordinators across Australia dedicated to creating and maintaining a space that is accessible to all students, graduates, new librarians and technicians in the Australian library and information industry. The group offers all in the industry professional development events such as interview skills and resume review workshops with highly skilled professionals, as well as social/networking events to get you meeting and greeting other students and new grads.'

One of the questions that Hiba and I are often asked is: 'Can I join the New Graduates Group even though I'm still a student?' The answer? Yes. You don't have to be a 'new graduate' to join the Group. There are lots of ways to get involved. You can:

- Sign up for the New Graduates Group e-list: www.alia.org.au/elists/alianewgrad
- Check out our page on the ALIA website: www.alia.org.au/groups/alia-new-graduates
- Like us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/ALIANewGraduatesGroup
- Read our blog: <http://alianewgrad.blogspot.com.au/>
- Follow us on Twitter: @ALIANewgrads
- Attend our regular social events
- Attend our professional development workshops (discount rates for ALIA members)
- Plus, if you are an ALIA member and would like to assist us to plan and deliver activities, why not volunteer as a Regional Coordinator?

Whichever way you choose to become involved, please know that you are very welcome in this incredible community of librarians. If you need to debrief about a very needy patron, or rhapsodise about that new 'Beastie Boys + Librarians' video (<http://vimeo.com/66169135>), we're here for you. Welcome to the family!

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