



NETWORKING

There is life after parenthood, as *SUE DOWLING* tells us, and working in the LIS sector is a big part of it.

I was a stay-at-home mum until, one day, my life changed. While working as a volunteer at my son's school library, I decided, after careful consideration, that the library sector provided an exciting challenge and one that I was passionate about. I decided to get back into the workforce as a Library Technician.

After a shaky start in the Diploma of Library and Information Services course at TAFE SA, I can proudly say that I have attained both Certificates III and IV, and will complete my diploma this year. It has been an exceptional journey with many ups and downs along the way, but I have enjoyed every minute of it. I highly recommend this course of study to anyone passionate about the LIS sector.

Very early on in my studies I joined ALIA as a student member, which has afforded me many advantages over students who have not joined the association. One, in particular, has been free or discounted admission to many ALIA events over the years. I was also extremely impressed with the new Member website in 2015, the Professional Development Scheme and the FAIR (Freedom of Access to Information and Resources) campaigns.

As a volunteer at many public and school libraries, during my studies, I am aware of many issues that mainly relate to South Australian libraries. So, with this in mind, early in 2015 I joined the ALIA SA Group. As a founding

member, I immediately took an interest in becoming the secretary of the group.

Since then, I have learned many new skills, worked with an amazing group of people and networked with library professionals. I would not have had these opportunities if I had not joined the group.

The most memorable event for me was the one that targeted students from information management courses at both TAFE and university. Planned as a networking event, students were able to ask questions of four panel members currently working as library professionals in Adelaide. Most of these questions were about finding employment within the sector.

Although I was a novice, I volunteered to be MC for the event and soon learned that a lot of preparation, practice and new skills were required to fulfil this important role. On the day, I was pleasantly surprised at how well I controlled my nerves, and I very much enjoyed the challenge.

In 2016, the ALIA SA Group is organising some exciting events. Invitations are sent out through the South Australian elists and in the event section on the ALIA website. Meetings are held on the fourth Tuesday of the month at various library venues around Adelaide.

When I complete my TAFE library studies I hope to find work in a school, specialist or business library. However, as a realist I am aware that the job market in South Australia is less than ideal, but with the changing nature of the library and information sector other opportunities may present themselves. ✨

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