

# MY MENTORING EXPERIENCE

**N**AOMI SINCLAIR, a mentee in the first intake of the ALIA Mentoring Scheme, reports on the highlights and benefits of her participation.

I signed up for the ALIA Mentoring Scheme to keep engaged with the industry as, after finishing studying, I worried that I had disengaged. When I commenced the program I was struggling to even get interviews for jobs in the library and information sector and I felt that I had difficulty understanding the industry.

I was matched to my mentor, Mare Maticevski formerly of Yarra Libraries. As we are neighbours, we were able to meet in person in the amazing Bargoonga Nganjin North Fitzroy Library and local cafes. This meant our meetings were relaxed and held a conversational tone with a swapping of viewpoints. Our similar outlook on the industry and Mare's ability to clearly communicate why certain decisions are made helped us to build a strong rapport.

One issue we spent a long time discussing was personal branding. Some people on social media seem to do this flawlessly and Mare gave examples of people she knew who present differently online than they do in person. I also volunteered at the Royal Historical Society of Victoria for a time. However, the need to work made it hard to continue to volunteer and gain library experience.

I did progress in my goal of being employed in public libraries. While I am yet to successfully find work, I have been getting interviews and will continue to apply. I believe the perspective Mare has given me by explaining the type of jobs I should apply for and her help understanding selection criteria and formatting responses have directly contributed to me getting these interviews.

Together we used the resources given to us by ALIA to help me work towards my goals. As the year progressed we used these resources as jumping off points to move onto the issues that were more relevant to my situation. Overall, the mentoring program has had a massive benefit for me. It has improved my confidence and Mare has helped refine ideas and given me different perspectives on issues. 🌟

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## NAOMI SINCLAIR

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# There's no age limit on learning at the public library

**C**HRISTIANE BIRKETT helps the users of Gunnedah Shire Library learn for life with the innovative Brain Training @ the Library program.

Seniors at Gunnedah Shire Library have the opportunity to take part in lifelong learning by attending one of the Brain Training @ the Library programs which run for an hour every Monday at 10.30am and 3.30pm. Brain Training @ the Library targets a variety of brain skills such as visual, non-dominant hand use, vocabulary, creativity, fine motor skills, concentration, number skills, pattern recognition, word association, memory, and logic.

We use fun activities such as word maker, spot the difference, join the dots, find the objects, number games, trivia questions, decode the message, and word games. Morning or afternoon tea is provided and the program is so popular that when a member can't attend for some reason they ask that their puzzles be kept for them so they don't miss out.

It takes approximately an hour to assemble a program, copy the activities, and print the session plan. The session itself takes an hour but we spend extra time before and after chatting with the participants, advising on 'good books', assisting with printing or photocopying, and so on.



*Brain training @ the Library, Gunnedah Shire Library*

New residents have joined Brain Training, and through their new friends have been invited to other activities for seniors, helping the integration into their new society. For some of the older brain trainers, it's their social outing of the week, enabling them to partake in fun, learning activities in a safe and comfortable setting – truly a case of the library being a social hub. 🌟

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