



Anne Hazell
Board of Education

On 8 September I attended the third meeting of the Arts Training Australia National Task Force for this project, held in Melbourne.

Two significant points relating to the nature of this project were emphasised at the September meeting:

- that ATA is the only Industry Training Advisory Body which is consulting with professional associations in the development of industry competencies, and,
- the Library Project is the only project attempting to develop competency standards across the whole range of the industry, i.e., from library assistant to senior librarian.

Most ALIA members are represented on the task force by at least two or three other groups, e.g., unions, ACLIS, CAUL, the Commonwealth, an employer. We should all use every avenue available to ensure that our needs are met.

Margaret Thurstans, the newly-appointed Senior Project Officer to the Project, attended the meeting. Margaret brings extensive experience in research and policy development in education and training, equal opportunity and industrial relations. Most recently she has been working in the National Youth Sector Training Unit that is coordinating the development of a training system for workers with young people, encompassing the development of competency standards, core curriculum and mechanisms for assessment and delivery. Previously Margaret was Assistant Adviser to the Federal Minister for Industrial Relations, Senior Adviser to the Tasmanian Minister whose portfolios included Assisting the Premier on the Status of Women, and Senior Industrial Officer with the Tasmanian Public Service Association where she represented library workers at all levels in industrial, award and classification matters and

had considerable contact with staff of the State Library of Tasmania. Margaret has been on several committees evaluating the effect of new technology in the workplace.

Because competency standards are based on what workers do or need to be able to do, currently and in the future, Margaret will have contact with workers in all areas of library work as a key part of the competency standards project. The first few months will be a very busy period involving data collection through group discussion and interviews with library workers at all levels about their major activities and the skills and knowledge they bring to their work. Information is already being collected to 'map' the industry to ensure that all aspects of library work are reflected in the data collection.

While it will not be possible for Margaret to talk to everyone in the industry in the early stages, all library staff will have the opportunity to provide input either in the initial data collection phases or through validation process. The first two states that Margaret will visit will be Queensland and Victoria, to get a representative sample of a broad range of library work. In some states or territories, data collection may focus on special areas. A validation process is built into the methodology for developing competency standards to check that the draft standards developed from a sample of workers do have broad application.

There is a commitment to keep library workers informed of progress through regular bulletins and through members of the project's Task Force.

Margaret is looking forward to meeting with library workers around the country, renewing contacts, and hearing first hand about current work and possible future developments. She will take up her position at the national office of Arts Training Australia in Sydney on 5 October.

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National industry training plan

In its role as an Industry Training Advisory Body rather than as a Competency Standards Body, Arts Training Australia has been asked by the Commonwealth government to begin to identify the training requirements of the library and information services industry.

This is a logical next step after the development of industry competency standards. To this end, a paper entitled *Draft consultative document: libraries* has been widely distributed for discussion at a series of meetings organised by the local Arts Training committees to be held around the country in September/October.

The information gathered in this project will be used by such bodies as the Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) in the distribution of funding not only to such bodies as TAFE but also to private training providers and for on-the-job training.

NSW local government competency-based training project

At the September meeting for the first time the Task force was able to view a draft set of competency standards developed specifically for a section of the industry in Australia. These are the Band 1, i.e., library assistant, competencies for use in New South Wales public libraries.

They are currently being trialed and it is hoped that they will be included in the national competency standards for local government employees. Development of further competency standards for library technicians and librarians is on hold pending the outcome of the national library competencies project. ■