

Keeping events relevant to special librarians

Heather Layton, president, ALIA Special Libraries Section (South Australia)

1999 has been a particularly active year for the South Australian Special Libraries Section. The section has a strong local presence with our 130 members making up twenty-one per cent of South Australian ALIA membership. Highlights of the year were well-supported functions, the Specials Health and Law Librarians Conference held in Hobart, and contributions at a state, national and international level on wider issues affecting our profession.

The committee devoted considerable energy this year to communicating with members. In March and again in September we wrote to members explaining our plans and seeking feedback. At times we sought input from sub-sections of our membership on specific issues.

One of our objectives was to hold activities relevant to the work and interests of special librarians. We held five functions:

- a celebration of International Special Librarians' Day on 15 April at the Adelaide Zoo. The event was jointly hosted with the Health Libraries Section and over thirty librarians took the opportunity to meet in a novel setting and to catch up with colleagues. This successful event was rounded off with a tour of the Zoo Library and, as a gesture of appreciation to the Zoo for their interest, the Section is sponsoring a barking owl for twelve months.
- a tour of three special libraries: the Museum, Minter Ellison (a private law firm) and Santos, took place on 3 June. Over-subscription to the event indicated support for more functions of this type.
- more than sixty-five members of the library profession attended a half-day seminar on copyright and the internet co-hosted with UCRLS, the Health Libraries Section and the Australian Law Librarians Group on 7 July.
- a feedback session in early September for those not fortunate enough to attend the Hobart Conference.
- last but not least the annual general meeting and cocktail party on 1 December.

Another of our objectives was to facilitate interaction with other sections and specialised groups and a number of our functions were co-hosted. We were particularly pleased to welcome Janine Tan, Branch council representative, to our Committee meetings. Philip Keane, Kinetica representative, kept us informed about Kinetica activities.

This year the committee has been involved in the wider library community to a significant extent:

- the Section lobbied the South Australian Branch Council about the proposed closure of the National Technical Information Service (NTIS). As a result the ALIA executive director wrote to the Secretary of Commerce, Department of Commerce, Washington DC asking that the decision be reconsidered (see p32);
- the Section forwarded a submission to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs Inquiry into the *Copyright Amendment (Digital Agenda) Bill 1999*. The submission was based on feedback from members working in non-profit and corporate libraries and expressed concerns about some proposals in the Bill;
- a representative group of special librarians met with Pro-

fessor Larry Amey to discuss the review of the under-graduate and post-graduate courses in Library and Information Science offered at the University of South Australia. A follow-up letter was sent to Professor Rowan, pro vice-chancellor, University of South Australia;

- Heather Layton presented a lecture to librarianship students at the University of South Australia, the topic of which was collection development in special libraries;
- we provided feedback to ALIA National Office on policy documents and other issues;
- a section representative attended each SA Branch Council meeting, and special libraries were promoted in *Interalia*; and
- liaison with the Australian Law Librarians Group, the ALIA Health Libraries Section and the ALIA Library Technicians Section continued through representation on the Committee.

We have maintained a close liaison with the National Special Libraries Section. Members met with the national president Christine McClaren on several occasions and have provided input on issues such as the future of the journal *Australian Special Libraries*. The Section was represented at the National Special Libraries annual general meeting at the 8th Asia-Pacific Specials, Health and Law Librarians Conference in Hobart in August. Preliminary plans are in hand for the 2003 Conference which will be held in Adelaide. ■

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