

New options for trainers and trainees in library and information services

In twelve years of presenting training programs for the information sector, AIMA Training and Consultancy Services has provided programs for around 18 000 people. Now, with accreditation as a Registered Training Organisation (RTO), AIMA is about to join with library schools and other specialist agencies to add flexibility to training options in the sector with new training partnerships and programs aimed at reaching even more participants.

As an RTO, participants in AIMA's core programs, and in their increasingly extensive in-house programs, will receive national recognition for the training they do. That means participants can use their AIMA training to build towards a TAFE or University qualifications, including: Diploma of Business; Advanced Diploma of Business; Certificate II in Library and Information Services; Advanced Diploma of Library and Information Services; Certificate II in

Museum Practice; Advanced Diploma of Museum Practice; Certificate III in Information Technology; Diploma of Information Technology; Certificate IV in Assessment and Workplace Training; Certificate IV in Quality Management and Assurance; Diploma of Training and Assessment Systems; and Management and Leadership.

A key factor in this development is AIMA's partnership approach, and specialist agencies such as CAVAL and DocMatrix have been amongst the first to join with AIMA in expanding the training calendar to include their courses. This will mean AIMA can coordinate training packages for clients ranging from the integrated flexible learning programs in technical library skills developed by DocMatrix plus the assessment of these modules, right through to management skills.

According to Brenda McConchie, AIMA's executive director, AIMA will give top priority to developing training alliances with other agencies with the aim of increasing the number of students in programs across the sector. Expanding the training calendar to include the best recognised training in Australasia will offer information sector organisations a 'one-stop shop' to organise their training needs, and extra motivation and flexibility for participants through increased training options to build towards qualifications officially recognised across the sector.

All appropriate courses will be linked to the recognised processes and training structure of the national curriculum, and RTO accreditation will also enable AIMA to support new apprenticeship schemes — a critical form of support to information agencies wanting to develop in-house training that meets recognised national standards. AIMA will be able to issue certificates in partnership with TAFE as part of this process. AIMA's activities as an RTO opens up new opportunities for training and skill development in our sector, said Jennefer Nicholson, ALIA executive director.

ALIA has a link from ALIANet to AIMA's new website [<http://www.aima.org.au> will]. The site will have all the details as courses are added to the new calendar. For more information contact AIMA: phone 02 6230 0672, fax 02 6230 1690 or e-mail info@aima.org.au. ■

ALIA protests closure of NTIS

ALIA executive director Jennefer Nicholson has written to the United States Secretary of Commerce, William M Daley, expressing the Association's concern about the proposed closure of the National Technical Information Service (NTIS).

The public communications director of the United States Special Libraries Association (SLA), John Crosby, has welcomed our support and is keeping us informed of SLA lobbying moves.

The forty-year-old NTIS has a collection of over 3 000 000 scientific, technical and engineering titles, including United States and international research reports, statistical data and technical standards. In addition to its role as a central locus for scientific and technical information, NTIS also acts as the United States government's permanent repository for this information.

Originally government-funded, NTIS has had to be financially self-sustaining since 1987. Increasing internet content and use has resulted in financial losses, including \$US1.9 million for 1998.

The United States Department of Commerce has recommended to Congress that the service be closed by the end of the financial year in 2000. It is proposed that the NTIS archives be transferred to the Library of Congress and that government

agencies will maintain technical reports and business information on their websites 'for long periods of time', according to a departmental fact sheet released in August.

ALIA's letter made the following points:

- Australian government and research libraries see NTIS as an important information resource;
- NTIS's value lies in its coverage and organisation of quality scientific and technical information and availability through CD-ROM technology;
- the information is more efficiently searchable than internet searching;
- the database also provides archival access; and
- its demise will seriously restrict access to specialised research.

The executive director of the Special Libraries Association, David Bender, is concerned about the availability of printed format in present and future publications and the lack of consultation of the library community and other stakeholders by the Department.

Fact sheets from the United States Department of Commerce on this issue are available from <http://www.doc.gov> and information from the Special Libraries Association at <http://www.sla.org/govt/daley>. ■