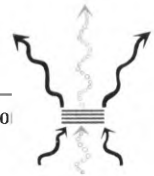


Strategy winds up



The ALIA/ASA (Australian Society of Archivists) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment strategy for the library, information and archives sector began in 1996. The strategy provided employers with a subsidy to employ indigenous cadets enrolled in library technician, archival and librarianship courses.

The strategy aimed to provide permanent employment opportunities for indigenous people wanting to work as librarians, library technicians and archivists. The Commonwealth provided the funding for the subsidies to employers. ALIA was responsible for providing the necessary administrative support to run the program. The strategy finished in March 2000. Following are reports from some of those who participated in the strategy...

Increasing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander representation

Sydney Institute has a long-standing commitment to positively and actively support increased representation of Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders in the workplace. The Sydney Institute Library shares this commitment, for instance, through the provision of a specialist library service at the Eora Centre, and through the supply of one designated, full-time professional librarian position as the Centre's librarian-in-charge.

Given this commitment, and with the support of the Institute's Executive, the Sydney Institute Library enthusiastically embraced the ALIA/ASA Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy for the Library, Information and Archives sector. The Library viewed the strategy as

an opportunity to increase the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in the sector. The Library also recognised that through an increase in their representation in the staffing profile, the library might become more accessible to Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders.

The Sydney Institute Library gained approval to employ a cadet library technician under the terms of the strategy. The NSW TAFE Aboriginal Development Division supported the proposal and agreed to fund the employer's training component. Recruitment to the position, based on merit selection, was completed in early 1998. The successful applicant, Lee Lazarevic was offered permanent appointment upon successful completion

of the Diploma in Library and Information Studies. As Lee was a resident of Newcastle

he completed his Diploma with Hunter Institute of Technology.

Lee is currently located in the Ultimo library's Educational Services Team. This team is responsible for providing leadership and support to the Eora Centre library, and for the effectiveness of the Ultimo library's faculty liaison and information skills programs. Lee is already making a substantial contribution to the operational effectiveness of this team.

The role of the employer involved securing approval to engage in the strategy, ensuring the re-imbursment of funds from the Department of Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (DEETYA) and from the Aboriginal Development Division, and liaising with the Hunter Institute regarding Lee's practicums. In relation to the practical training component, Lee participated in the standard induction program structured to co-incide with his thirteen-week employment within the library for each year of the two year cadetship. The library was fortunate in having a person who was self-motivated and enthusiastic, who required only minimal support beyond 'on-the-job training' and who was able to complete his study in the minimum time frame.

Participation in the strategy has been a rewarding and a worthwhile experience for the library. I would recommend that other libraries adopt similar schemes as a positive way to support an increase in the representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees in the workplace and within the profession.

Charmaine Caskey, divisional librarian, Services, TAFE NSW, Sydney Institute Library



A great way to study...

Lee Lazarevic, library technician, TAFE NSW, Sydney Institute

A little over two years ago I applied for a cadetship provided by the Department of Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs (DEETYA), the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) and TAFE NSW. This was one of many careers available to Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders through the Commonwealth public service. I chose the cadetship because I felt a Diploma in Library and Information Studies, with a Technology component, would be a valuable qualification to have in this age. My career plan is to eventually teach non-English speaking background peoples in Australia and abroad.

I began the cadetship in 1998, which involved full-time study at TAFE and part-time work experience. The 'on-the-job' training greatly assisted in my understanding of the profession and it also gave me an advantage over



Lee Lazarevic

other students — when I completed the Diploma, I was fully skilled and ready for work.

The most enticing aspect for anyone who decides to pursue a cadetship is that everything is provided to assist you in your studies, including assistance with textbooks, course fees, travel allowance and also a training wage which is more supportive than the Abstudy allowance.

The cadetship was a great way to complete tertiary study without the financial burden, and upon graduation I had a permanent position waiting for me. ■