

Did the difference matter?



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Few conferences begin with the expectation of the unexpected, of difference, but as Kim Farley Larmour of the Australian Bureau of Statistics explained, she knew from the opening words of Dagmar Schmidmaier and then ALIA president Alan Bundy at the welcome reception, that she was on the threshold of something unique.

Robyn Cammack, also of the ABS, said that she had given up on going to ALIA biennial conferences as much of what she usually heard had been said before and the 'gems' were far between. This conference was perfect, she said, for people in mid- and high-career. To these people the conference delivered energy, enthusiasm, and a perspective of their own industry from outside that will prove invaluable to service development.

Helen Mandl of Wollongong University says 'I think people appreciated the different nature of the conference, the calibre of the speakers and the different viewpoints that came across. It seems to have generated some momentum and it will be interesting to see where things go'.

Stephen Churm from Southern Scene said that the space and his new look walk-through stand worked well. He commented on the good cross-section of delegates at the conference.

Shirley Forster from Altarama Systems was showcasing two new products at the trade exhibition and said it was great to be able to get these in front of senior members of the profession.

Ian McCallum, co-moderator of the Issues Forum with Libraries Alive! partner Sherrey Quinn, reckons that 'if understanding that our present is a pre-requisite for powering our future, then ... ALIA 2002 was a resounding success.' In his post-event report posted to the Issues Forum e-list, Ian commented that 'devising a conference that addressed for the most part in a single stream and by people from "outside" libraries was a dangerous distance from our comfortable format...' Ian went on to note that 'in their closing remarks, first



powering our future

contribute to the information agenda → ALIA 2002

Neil McLean and then Joyce Kirk pointed out that incremental change is no longer enough, that transformational change will be needed to secure sustainability for the library sector. Building bridges with natural partners outside our profession, is now imperative — and well and truly on the information agenda.

'It was a challenging, confronting conference. What we do with what we learned is obviously up to us. Joyce may well prove prescient in her suspicion that ALIA 2002 will in hindsight be seen as a watershed,' he said.

Okay, it was interesting, but can you use it: Macquarie University and the University of Technology, Sydney library staff will use the conference content as a catalyst for a strategic planning day later this year.

ALIA NSW Forum held a special meeting on 27 August to look at how, as a group, they can further the information agenda, using papers from the final conference session as their starting point.

And the wash up?

Conferences are big business and they are risky business. ALIA 2002 will not return a profit to the Association, but it has been a very worthwhile investment. Those that wagered on the difference and turned up at Darling Harbour won the most, leaving personally inspired, stimulated and informed. Those that didn't will feel the benefits as they ripple through the organisation. You can still be part of this exciting process. Read the papers on the website, join in conversations about the agenda for the information profession.

The lessons of the conference are many, but the important one is that in each of us rests the power to shape our future and that it will be shaped by our own action — or inaction. Either way, we will be responsible, so we better make it something of which we can be proud.

Viva la difference. ■

Hands-on metadata: led by Bruce McLeod of Spirit Consulting. CAVAL Collaborative Solutions, 4 Park Drive, Bundoora, 1:30–4:30pm. Cost: \$198 CAVAL/ALIA members, \$220 non-members. Contact: Eve Cornish, evcc@caval.edu.au, register online at http://www.caval.edu.au/Services/rego_form.html

• **14/10–11/11 Specials Libraries (Vic).** *General meeting.* 14/10, 11/11. Swets Blackwell, 4 Bennetts Lane, Melbourne, 5:30pm. *RSVP:* Traci Webb, twebb@au.swetsblackwell.com

15/10 CAVAL training activities. *Kinetica document delivery.* CAVAL Collaborative Solutions, 4 Park Drive, Bundoora, 9:30–5:00pm. Cost: \$198 CAVAL/ALIA members, \$220 non-members. Contact: Eve Cornish, evcc@caval.edu.au, register online at http://www.caval.edu.au/Services/rego_form.html

16/10 CAVAL training activities. *Kinetica web hands-on.* CAVAL Collaborative Solutions, 4 Park Drive, Bundoora, 9:30–12:30pm. Cost: \$110 CAVAL/ALIA members, \$132 non-members. Contact: Eve Cornish, evcc@caval.edu.au, register online at http://www.caval.edu.au/Services/rego_form.html

17/10 CAVAL training activities. *Government information on the web.* CAVAL Collaborative Solutions, 4 Park Drive, Bundoora, 1:30–4:30pm. Cost: \$110 CAVAL/ALIA members, \$132 non-members. Contact: Eve Cornish, evcc@caval.edu.au, register online at http://www.caval.edu.au/Services/rego_form.html

• **19/10 Schools Victoria.** *Committee meeting.* Santa Maria College Library, Northcote, 9:30am. All ALIA members are warmly invited to attend. For further information contact: Maree McDonagh, convenor, ph 03 9334 0012, maree.mcdonagh@overnewton.vic.edu.au

• **19/10 Victorian Library Technicians.** *Job seekers forum:* half-day workshop covering resumes and interview skills. Margie Anderson from One Umbrella will present news on the current job market. State Library of Victoria. Cost: \$5.50 ALIA members; \$7.70 students; \$11.00 non-members. To join the mailing list for brochures contact: Clare Bristow, rees@deakin.edu.au

• **16/11 Schools Victoria.** *AGM and committee meeting.* Santa Maria College Library, Northcote. AGM starting at 9am. All ALIA members are warmly invited to attend. For further information contact: Maree McDonagh, convenor, ph 03 9334 0012, maree.mcdonagh@overnewton.vic.edu.au

• **December Special Libraries (Vic).** *End of year/Xmas drinks and dinner.* Further details: tba.

WA

• **23/10 WA Library Technicians.** *General meeting.* Venue: tba.

• **25/11 WA Library Technicians.**

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