

Focus on **ALIA Groups**

ALIA SCHOOLS

The goals of ALIA Schools are to:

- encourage collegiality among its members
- promote the interests of school libraries and teacher-librarians
- provide opportunities for professional development for personnel in school libraries
- lobby for school libraries with national, state and local groups
- liaise with other professional groups in the field
- identify and analyse current trends in teacher-librarianship
- maintain the profile of teacher-librarians within the ALIA structure
- hold regular meetings and disseminate information in print and electronic format.

Since its inception, ALIA Schools has attracted members from various Australian states and from overseas. As part of a strategy to offer professional development to this broad membership base, for several years ALIA Schools has offered opportunities for members to participate in a series of online forums. The document, *Standards of Professional Excellence for Teacher Librarians*, was explored online in 2005, followed by a forum on copyright in 2006. 'Blogging: Transforming the Social Into the Educational' was the theme of this year's online conference, held in late February. In recognition of this initiative and the work that the group undertakes at the national level, a decision has been made to delete Victoria from the group's name. The group's e-list name has been altered to reflect this change.

Another feature of the work of ALIA Schools has been the way it has actively sought to form partnerships with other professional groups in the field. One such partnership is with the Australian School Library Association (ASLA). The Policy Advisory Group is a national committee with representatives from ALIA and ASLA. It was formed in 2002 to offer advice and develop policy.

A major current project of the ALIA/ASLA Policy Advisory Group is an electronic survey in partnership with Edith Cowan

University (ECU). This aims to build an accurate snapshot of all school libraries in Australia, and will enable comparisons to be made between the data gathered and national data from the Department of Education Science and Training on students' literacy learning outcomes. It will also provide opportunities for evidence-based advocacy for school libraries.

The survey will collect statistical data in the areas of resources and collection development, budget allocations, staffing profiles and staffing qualifications. It has been constructed to ensure that confidentiality of individual schools and personnel is maintained. The survey will be conducted annually, for five years, from 2007. The information gathered will be owned jointly by ASLA, ALIA and ECU.

The survey is an ambitious undertaking and it is anticipated that the results will empower the profession and provide the evidence required for lobbying at both national and state levels.

Another collaboration, this time with the Victorian Catholic Teacher Librarians, produced *A Manual for Developing Policies and Procedures for Australian School Library Resource Centres*. The Manual was officially launched by Judy Maddigan, Member of Parliament for Essendon at the recent ALIA Schools seminar held on Saturday 4 August at the Resource Centre at Santa Maria College, Northcote. In the spirit of co-operation, this document is made available to all school library resource centres in Australia at no cost. It is only in electronic form and is available on the ALIA website at <<http://alia.org.au/groups/aliaschools/policies.procedures.pdf>> and can also be accessed via the Myclasses and the ASLA websites. An accompanying template in Word is also available.

The *Manual* sets out how to develop the policies and document the procedures that are essential for exemplary management practices. The implementation of these policies and procedures will ensure that there is equitable access to resources for all users. A school library resource centre that is well managed is in the best possible position to offer the range of library programs and services that are essential to the endeavours of the school community.

The *Manual* includes a glossary of working terms, a reference list, and the following nine sections: Staffing, Processing, Collection development, Circulation, Budgeting, Stocktaking, Ordering, Copyright, and Cataloguing. The first part of each section is on policy; the second on procedures.

The members of the Working Party were Anne Chowne, Anne Girolami, Sue Maher, Jan McCormick, Sandra Ryan and Tilly Stoove. This dedicated group worked tirelessly in a strictly voluntary capacity. Each member also serves in their respective associations as well as work in school libraries either in a primary or secondary school setting. They are to be commended for their time spent writing, editing, discussing, debating and formatting, and their vision for and support of the document.

ALIA Schools is continually maintaining effective partnerships so that their vision in looking at ways to advocate for and promote the role of teacher librarians and school libraries is utmost in their endeavours.

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