

ASLA XX Hearts on Fire: Sharing the Passion

Adelaide 2–5 October 2007

The Australian School Library Association (ASLA) held its twentieth national conference in Adelaide during the October school holidays. ASLA hosted the conference in conjunction with the School Library Association of South Australia (SLASA).

ASLA chose to share the passion, with those who have a commitment to school libraries, through a range of information related to literature, learning and literacies. The ASLA XX Conference featured a range of distinguished presenters who are experts in their fields. They were supported by practitioners and specialists who shared their skills to allow school library staff to move forward with an array of expertise. These skills further enhance student learning by allowing them to develop the skills they need to research information, make use of the multitude of information communication technologies and take pleasure in the variety of wonderful literature that is available worldwide.

Howard Rheingold, the critic and writer who specialises in the cultural, social and political implications of modern communication media, was one of the keynotes for the conference. He spoke about the way humans get things done and the role educators have in seeking to transform schools and lifelong learning. Howard is the author of *Smart Mobs: the Next Social Revolution* which delves into collective and network intelligence.

Mem Fox, the quintessential Australian children's author, spoke about a topic on which she is eminently qualified to speak. Her address linked into the conference theme of passion: for literature and literacy. Mem is well known for the wonderful and much-loved stories she writes, for her expertise about literacy and for the advice she shares about children and reading. She gave a

very animated address, featuring her own books, to discuss the importance of reading including reading aloud to all students which she described as an act of love.

Karen Brooks writes with enthusiasm in a very distinct and engaging style. She discussed young people and their reading intertwined with the effects of popular culture. She stated that family, church and schools used to provide young people with values but in many circumstances this is now provided by media.

John Connell delivered the first Dr Laurel Anne Clyde Memorial Address where he paid tribute to Anne as being at the forefront of thinking on the ideas of Web 2.0 technology in education. John spoke about education and the transformation for the twenty-first century. He suggested allowing students to bring their outside passions into schools and to use the technologies they use in everyday life to enhance their learning and work collaboratively with them. John questions how we might redefine schools to meet the needs of today's young.

With the world changing at a dramatic rate, the conference had a distinct focus on how school libraries of Australia can best enhance the learning of our young people in these current times. Teacher librarians can assist the students to reach their full potential through quality teaching and learning programs supported by vital resources. Delegates enjoyed a full learning program along with a fun social agenda.

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QUT provides ultimate flexibility in 'real world' library and information studies

For the first time next year, the Queensland University of Technology will deliver its Master of Information Management course online, offering students and industry experts the ultimate in educational flexibility.

Unit coordinator and winner of last year's prestigious Carrick Awards for teaching excellence, Associate Professor Sylvia Edwards, said students are often juggling work and family responsibilities.

In 2008, QUT will join a number of other Australian library and information education schools in offering its course in online and/or flexible delivery formats.

Similarly to other library schools, QUT continuously reviews and improves its courses to ensure it is providing the best quality learning environments that meet the changing needs of both students and employers.

Associate Professor Edwards said beginning 2008, the Master of Information Management course would take full advantage of web technologies such as social networking, blogs, wikis, podcasting, while continuing to provide the same sense of community.

'Students will have the chance to study units in diverse and emerging areas such as web content reliability, information literacy education, digital libraries, records systems', she said.

Want to know more? Contact Helen Partridge, Course Coordinator of the Master of Information Management, on 07 3138 9047 or email <h.partridge@qut.edu.au>.

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Unfinished Business

Special library history double issue of *The Australian Library Journal* is out now.

'Unfinished business' is the title given by Guest Editor Dr David Jones to the complete set of 17 papers delivered at the Forum on Australian Library History held at the State Library of NSW in September 2007.

And what fascinating reading they make! The people and the libraries that established our profession and record our past to inform our future. If you thought *Uniting a Profession* (David Jones & Jean Whyte, ALIA, 2007) was a compelling read, wait till you dip into *Unfinished Business*!

ALJ volume 56, numbers 3 & 4 in one 220-page bumper issue. Out now. Free to subscribers, or \$45 including GST and p&p. <<http://shop.alia.org.au>>