



LEAD ON!

Allow me, this once, a moment of editorial pontification - because pulling together contributions on the topic of leadership has brought on a reflective mood for yours truly. It is now 20 years since I set off in trepidation to be Australia's first export to the Snowbird Leadership Development Institute in Utah at the behest of the Director-General of the National Library. Would that Snowbird magic work on an Australian, they, he (and I) wondered? It did.

Snowbird led to an Australasian program called Aurora and soon was joined by other Australian programs training in, and examining, leadership in our profession. Now we also have the concept of 'followership' - completely unknown back in 1991 and yet so, so obviously necessary. Leaders aren't going to do too much unless they have followers, after all.

Read on to find the thoughts on leadership of your colleagues, some who are looking for leaders to inspire us all, some who are reflecting on how life has changed since they first participated in leadership programs and some who have been exploring the key literacies in leadership that we all need to understand.

I was taught leaders inspire others. So we must give special recognition to Dyan Hosler for her contribution, emailed as promised even amidst the chaos and heartache of the Christchurch earthquake. That's leadership spirit.

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COLLABORATION KEY TO LEADERSHIP MIX

Talking About Open Access - a forum for a dialogue with authors, publishers and librarians - was the result of participation in the CAVAL leadership program in 2010 for four Victorian library professionals. The forum project aimed to generate creative thinking and establish some common ground.

The CAVAL Leadership program was facilitated by Monica Redden and Annie Talve of Make Stuff Happen and was conducted over a four month period, using a range of techniques to explore issues of leadership. During the residential workshops, for example, the participants are able to meet, hear from and discuss issues with a range of leaders from the profession and the community.

In our program, participants were challenged to focus on the themes of change, collaboration and creative aliveness and to set personal 'stretch' goals based on those themes. We were part of a cohort of emerging library leaders from academic, public and government department libraries from both Australia and New Zealand and the program allowed us to develop a collective project that supported our individual stretch goals.

Collaborating on the project allowed us to exercise the personal attributes we were discussing in the leadership program but its voluntary nature also helped by allowing each of us to demonstrate leadership and initiative in being open to taking up an opportunity. The chosen topic was not necessarily a new issue for each of us but we each seized the context to push further into the issues. Through regular teleconferences, we were able to identify how our various skills and experiences could contribute to our project. We also encouraged each other to take risks and use our access to the program facilitators to develop skills and learn new things.

It is unlikely some of us would have become involved with any enthusiasm had it been a task required for participation in the program because the spirit of being alive to the opportunity may well have been dampened by obligation. Many people who become involved in leadership programs are pretty busy and extra commitments,

however worthy, are avoided if possible - but commitments freely entered into with colleagues are a real driver to action. Moreover, talking to industry leaders gave us the confidence to have a go because high levels of confidence were not necessarily something we had before participating in the program.

What resulted was a professional event attended by librarians, faculty, publishers and CAVAL. Scoping and managing the forum involved approaching potential speakers and adopting a 'high-touch' preparation with them leading up to event, developing a blog to generate discussion beforehand and to publicise the event as well as the simple logistics of catering and venue booking. All this was accomplished within a supportive, collegial framework which included some excellent advice from Annie Talve and Monica Redden that contributed to its smooth running, and in the process made each of us more conscious of our leadership role.

Our commitment to leadership development has continued after the event, with significant investment in debriefing and an ongoing commitment to share our experiences with colleagues. We have continued to develop our understanding of the open access as well as the logistics of staging a panel discussion.

Successful leadership requires commitment to development (practice makes perfect). It requires us to research the environment, manage our networks (collaboration) and be open to different approaches and thoughts (creative aliveness). All that enables us to take advantage of opportunities to influence the local (bring about change).

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LEADERSHIP.