

# WOULD YOU LIKE A MENTOR?



**H**aving the guidance and advice of an experienced professional can be an invaluable knowledge-sharing experience and can lead to long-term career development. HEATHER WELLARD tells us about a brand-new mentoring opportunity which is free to ALIA Members.

From next year, ALIA is offering its Members the opportunity to be part of the ALIA Mentoring Scheme, powered by the International Librarians Network (ILN).

ILN offers peer-to-peer mentoring for library and information professionals who are matched with professional colleagues in other countries.

ALIA Members will have an exclusive period to nominate for the program before it opens for non-member participants. And participation will attract ALIA Professional Development points, for Members engaged in ongoing learning through the ALIA PD Scheme.

Sue McKerracher, CEO of ALIA, said: 'ALIA has run mentor-mentee programs in the past, with mixed results. ILN offers us a proven way of connecting like-minded individuals who can learn an enormous amount from one another.'

There are two rounds of the program a year, in which partnerships are facilitated – each one lasting for a few months.

The partnership is supported through regular contact and facilitated online group discussions. At the end of the term, partnerships finish, and participants have the option to sign up for a new partnership.

The best thing of all is that it is free, open to all ALIA Members – whether you are working or studying, starting your career or making a career change – and is fully supported by the ILN team.

Sue McKerracher added, 'Mentoring is about career development – it's a way of making connections with fellow professionals, helping colleagues, transferring ideas and building a network.'

'It's like having your very own sounding board outside of your organisation, who can provide advice based on similar experiences which can be invaluable at different stages of your career.'

The ILN matches participants based on the information provided in their application form. The matches are based on shared areas of interest, as well as factors such as the sector the prospective participants work in (for example, public libraries, academic libraries, special libraries), and what point they are at in their career. The ILN's peer mentoring model is flexible and can offer the opportunity to be matched with a colleague who is similar to you, but based in another part of the world, or a colleague who could be working in a completely different environment. The program encourages participants to be open to new and different perspectives and the ILN states that these principles are designed to give the partnerships the most to talk about and the most to learn from each other.

In September's issue of *INCITE*, Jenny Mustey, an ILN Australian Ambassador and participant in the program, paid tribute to the program, which she said, '... opened my world in a way I could never have imagined.'

Please consider getting involved. The first round of applications for mentoring opens mid-January 2016.

There is no better time to develop your career than now and professional development continues to be crucial in the ever-changing LIS environment.

More information is available from <http://www.alia.org.au/ILN>. 