

GUEST EDITORIAL



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As third year library and information students at Curtin University of Technology we enrolled in **Dr Paul Genoni's** Legal Reference unit with expectations of gaining some knowledge of legal reference sources and how to utilise them in library services. However, instead of legal referencing assignments we were invited to take on the role of guest editors of the *Australian Law Librarian* (ALL)

From the start the guidance of Paul and **Helen Wallace** has been integral to our success. They got us started with a brainstorming session and then showed us how to apply networking skills by guiding us through the large established networks they have both developed over the years in the law library environment. Through these various contacts, and our approach to several library schools to obtain information about the current situation with library education, we were able to begin our editorial journey

The articles collected in this issue taught us a lot about the industry because they went beyond describing the status quo of law librarianship education and raised some interesting issues. **Richard (Dick) Finlay's** original paper, although thirty years old, presents a balanced viewpoint recognising the realities of the industry but arguing that the industry should do more to provide specialist education. We are grateful to Dick for taking time out of his retirement to provide a latter day reflection on how things have (and have not) changed in the ensuing decades.

In contrast, **Mike Middleton** and **Dr Gillian Hallam** argue that the focus of library education should be on equipping students with skills to survive in an industry grappling

constant change rather than specialisation. Taking a pragmatic approach, **Professor Ross Harvey** and **Roy Sanders** provide insight into the recent developments and opportunities available at a Library and Information Science School.

The rest of the articles in the issue consider the transition from student to law librarian or library technician. We sought people on the move, leaving their current positions for bigger and better things. With **Alissa Sputore** we share her experience of the metamorphosis of a student into a professional librarian, and **Sharon Beccaria** provides a guide for training and education of library technicians.

Coming from student life to the world of nine-to-five full-time work is a daunting experience, but the transition can be made less so with the support of an individual or group. **Alison O'Connor** examines mentoring opportunities from several different angles.

The experience of producing an issue of a professional journal has been a new and exciting experience. In particular, we feel extremely pleased to be involved in this issue of the *Australian Law Librarian*. This is because legal reference training or education in the skills of law librarianship are of equal relevance to students, para-professionals, professionals and academics alike. The issues

raised, as Dick Finlay suggests, deserve more coverage



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