

## Your voice

### Stimulating debate...

I was pleased to see Don Schauder's letter in the August 2001 issue of *inCite*. My intention in writing the article 'Losing the quality battle in Australian education for librarianship' (ALJ v50 no1, February 2001) was to stimulate debate about professional education in LIS. Informed and active debate is essential to the well-being and continuing relevance of any profession, and LIS is no exception. Readers may want to look out for a forthcoming article in AARL by Wilson, Pawley and Willard that reports on research into aspects of LIS education in Australia. They may also want to participate in a proposed one day meeting, 'Better jobs, better rewards, better recognition: a dialogue on education for information professionals in Australia' initiated by ALIA's Information Specialists group and to be held in Sydney in October. Finally, readers may also wish to correct an inaccuracy in Don Schauder's letter: my article stated that the problems of Australian library schools 'may be so grave as to be fatal' (p15), not that they 'are so grave as to be fatal'.

**Ross Harvey,**  
**Charles Sturt University**

### A role for all in promoting information literacy

Reading Chris Fripp's contribution to 'Frontline', I found myself nodding in agreement with his remarks on professional barriers between information managers.

The corporate library where I work was until recently, compartmentalised into information (traditional library) and records management sections. As a qualified librarian in a predominantly records management position, this seemed archaic and obstructive to effective client servicing. These two distinct sections have gradually coalesced into a single 'library' group. As a result, we have all learnt new and valuable skills, and client needs are serviced more efficiently and effectively.

That is not to say that we do not all have individual and special-

ist roles to play within the information management industry, and indeed, within the particular groups of librarians, records managers, archivists and IT professionals, as noted by Mr Fripp.

However, having witnessed and taken an active part in improvements derived from increased co-operation between various information professionals, I can only applaud Chris Fripp in bringing the need for such co-operation to light, and join him in encouraging all information professionals to join together.

**Amber Sorensen, Sydney**

### Give graduates a go...

Phil Teece hit the nail right on the head with his article about new graduates in July's *inCite*. He is so right, that volunteer graduates can be abused and taken for granted, without any guarantee of employment, or even a reference to help them on their way.

There are a couple of additional points he omitted to mention. The first is the advantage that young graduates have over their older peers in computer literacy and confidence. So often you see older librarians who are almost scared of computers, have no idea how to use the internet, and hate change of a technological nature.

The other point is regarding older graduates and post-graduates like myself. Those who seek to redefine themselves in their 30s or 40s are at a major disadvantage in the job stakes — it beats me why. In my own case, I returned to university in 1995 after twenty-five years, to do a Graduate Diploma, and became a teacher librarian.

Since then, I have worked plenty of short contracts in school libraries and in records management, but have never been considered for a job with my name on it. It is very disheartening, as I have confidence in my ability as a librarian and cannot make that breakthrough to prove it.

Thank you for Phil's article. I hope that somewhere, someone

has taken his words on board and has hired a graduate as a result.

**Susan Levy**

### Something for everyone...

I am a teacher-librarian in a small country secondary school and proud to be an Associate of ALIA. While I read *inCite* each month and always find something of interest, I found the August edition to be particularly invigorating and relevant.

The Frontline article by Chris Fripp (RMAA) on 'The importance of information literacy' brought a smile to my lips. Teacher-librarians have been for many years, strong advocates of the importance of developing a high-level of information literacy in students, specifically in the context of our students becoming life-long learners. While the article does not name teacher-librarians I am heartened by the comment identifying the 'ever increasing need for all information professionals to work together [to produce information literate members of society].'

Jan Gaebler's letter in 'Your voice' reflected my opinion on the importance of teacher-librarians in preparing the library users of tomorrow. As she pointed out, teacher-librarians can belong to either ALIA or ASLA as their professional body. Since obtaining my qualifications I have chosen to belong to both ALIA (in the CPD scheme) and ASLA (though my school's membership of the School Library Association of Victoria). My motivation for belonging to both may be a consequence of having obtained separate qualifications in both general librarianship and school librarianship. It would be interesting to compare figures and other data on ALIA and ASLA teacher-librarian membership.

My reason for viewing both organisations as important lies in my perception of their relevance (to me). ALIA provides an essential global view of the information profession covering strategic areas, for example copyright regulations, while

ASLA provides essential tactical information targeted specifically to my role.

The 'Wow! What a great idea!' article was timely because I will be attending the biennial ASLA conference in Queensland in October. It highlighted some great ideas to help me make the most out of the conference.

With the purse strings well and truly tightened at my school it will be difficult to obtain permission to attend ALIA conferences in the future, however I did attend ALIA's 1998 biennial conference in Adelaide. The 'Powering our future ALIA2002' conference teaser article flags the concept of 'a remote or e-delegate to allow participation online' which I presume means that ALIA members who live a long way from Sydney and/or find it difficult to obtain permission from employers to attend conferences will be able to participate (in their own time) online somehow. Anyway, I hope that is what the 'e-delegate' concept means.

The other item I found of interest was the reporting of the access@schools program on the Networking the Nation page. This Victorian program provides community members with five hours of free internet access at their local school (generally after hours). The program is aimed at people who do not have ready access to the internet either at home or work. While there is no mandatory structure to follow, at my school I am incorporating a training element into the sessions, specifically on using web-based e-mail and effective internet search strategies.

**Craig Homberg,**  
**Terang College**

### Your voice

**Your letters on any issue of relevance to the library and information sector are welcomed.**

All letters should be addressed to the *inCite* editor and may be e-mailed to [incite@alia.org.au](mailto:incite@alia.org.au), or faxed to 02 6282 2249, or posted to: Your voice, ALIA, PO Box E441, Kingston ACT 2604. Please include your name and postal address with your letter or e-mail.

Letters will be accepted for publication until the 18th of the month.