



## WALT Conference Grant Recipient

---

### Michaela Shepherdson Winning Essay 2003

What goals have you set for yourself as a practicing library technician and how do you see library technician membership of ALIA assisting you towards achieving these goals?

I love books. I've always loved books; it was one of my first words. So it was no surprise to find myself working in a library. As I observed my fellow staff, attaining a position as a library technician became my goal.

The Edith Cowan University website describes a library technician as holding 'a para-professional role in the operation, maintenance and utilisation of library systems and staff supervisions'. I look forward to attaining this role and have a number of general and specific goals.

Upon being employed as a library technician, I plan to be adaptable, moving with the 21st century. Library services are expanding and evolving at a rapid rate, particularly electronic services. To provide the high level of service I strive for, it will be necessary for me to understand and be familiar with new systems and technology. Membership of ALIA and access to its mailing lists, newsletters, meetings and conference will provide me with information on new technological developments in the field.

In addition to improving and advancing my information technology skills, I wish to further develop my communication and interpersonal skills in the workplace. This applies to my relations with both clients and work-mates. Participation in ALIA's professional development program will allow me to learn new approaches to different situations and people.

Another of my ambitions as a library technician is to implement new ideas and programs. Efficiency is important to me, as is job satisfaction. By developing a more productive work-flow and improved services to library clients, I will be able to fulfil these goals. Being part of a nation-wide network, such as ALIA, will give me the opportunity to interact with many people in the same industry. This exposure could provide me with information on the programs and services of other libraries around Australia.

An advantage of an association that links people from libraries across the country is the feeling of solidarity. People with the same career goals and passions are able to easily communicate through ALIA. Queries, developmental opportunities and social activities can be posted on mailing lists that all ALIA members can then read and reply to. Upcoming conferences and courses are advertised in the association's publications. The feeling of a national library community is an encouragement to workers in the field.



An area of library technology that I particularly enjoy is cataloguing. That each book has a logical, ordered place suits my own logical personality. A position as a cataloguer is a goal I would like to explore, particularly participating in the cataloguing of different formats such as audiovisual and electronic resources.

After some experience as a technician, I would like to be considered for a supervisory role. I believe I would be a fair and considerate supervisor, and that I would be able to interact well with the other staff. I also believe that membership of ALIA will reflect my commitment to the industry and make me an appealing candidate for such a position.

I am currently employed in an academic library and my specific aim in becoming a library technician is to move into this role in the same institution. A task I will be called upon to perform is the information desk. This service is provided to clients with a variety of requests. Some will require assistance using scholarly databases, others the library catalogue. Other clients may have general directional queries or detailed reference searches. I plan to provide a friendly, accessible service to these clients and help them to the best of my ability.

Other tasks I may undertake as a library technician in a large academic library include projects such as weeding, digitisation of parts of the collection, liaising with library suppliers or maintaining specific resources and equipment. The quick, easy access to other library staff across Australia via ALIA will be useful for providing answers to problems I may come across in these tasks.

The social side of an association such as ALIA is also an important factor. It is enjoyable for people of the same profession to get to know one another on a personal level. Many people who chose the library technician profession will have many interests in common, not least the love of books. I am certain I could spend hours chatting about my favourite authors in a room full of fellow library technicians!

A major service offered by ALIA to the library industry is the recognition of educational courses in the field. It is important to me that my years of study are recognised and my qualifications confirmed.

The up-coming ALIA National Library Technician's Conference in Brisbane is an excellent example of the way in which ALIA helps its members to develop their skills and learn new ones. Topics to be covered include customer service, career development, IT skills, promotion and display, multicultural services and problem solving. These are all areas in which I strive to learn more about and improve my skills.

As a practicing library technician, I have many goals - personal and professional. I plan to continue developing my skills in many areas. These include information technology, communication, customer service and new library services in addition to improving specific library skills such as cataloguing and processing.

My aspiration as a library technician is to be flexible and up-to-date. Membership of an association such as ALIA will ensure I have access to information on new products



and services in libraries across Australia. I will be able to interact with fellow library technicians across the nation, in both professional and social situations. I will feel a sense of camaraderie with people in the same position as myself. All these benefits will ensure job satisfaction and, in turn, excellent service.

I enjoy and take pride in my work as a library assistant and have every reason to believe that I will find library technician tasks even more agreeable and interesting. I have faith that I will be successful in achieving my goals, and that membership of ALIA will be of great assistance in my doing so.