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Opportunity of Work Experience in the Pacific

The Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development Program, a Commonwealth Government initiative, currently has vacancies for law librarians and library technicians. The program identifies and places skilled young Australians, aged 18-30, on development assignments throughout the Asia Pacific region. It offers an opportunity to broaden your experience and increase your understanding of the cultural diversity and development needs of the region. Placements are for a minimum of 3 months up to about one year.

The first Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development left Australia in early March after two weeks' training. They will be taking up a variety of assignments, including working as doctors and teaching English as a second language.

The assignments will provide an excellent opportunity for staff professional development. It is possible that suitable projects will be put forward by regional Pacific participants in the ALLG Pacific Twinning Programme, to whom project information has been circulated.

For further information please contact Ms Colleen Doyle on (02) 6248 0493, or email colleen_doyle@ayad.org.au.

Cook Islands Laws

Laws of the Cook Islands 1994-1997, a two volume supplement to the 1994 consolidation of Cook Islands Laws has recently been published. The new set brings the law up to date as at 17 July 1997. It was compiled by Professor Anthony Angelo and Ms Rosemary

Gordon of Victoria University of Wellington. The supplement contains the Acts and subsidiary legislation from 1994 to 1997, chronological tables, and a finding list for the Cook Islands statutes and subsidiary legislation. The volumes have been published in A4 size and are available from Gaunt, Inc., law library suppliers, in Florida, USA.

What's Happening in New Zealand?

There has been considerable debate lately, on both the New Zealand law librarians' discussion list and the more general New Zealand library lists, about the future structure and governance of the Library and Information Association of New Zealand Aotearoa (LIANZA). Much discussion has centred around the vexed question of membership – should institutions be members (as they currently are) or should LIANZA be a professional body which represents librarians; how does LIANZA encourage more librarians to become members; are membership fees too high etc? Amongst this debate is the relationship the Special Interest Groups (SIGs) have with LIANZA. The New Zealand Law Librarians Group Inc (NZLLG) sits in a precarious position in the middle of all of this.

Growing out of a loose network of mainly academic law librarians in the 1970s, the NZLLG evolved during the mid-1980s when several firms and law societies began appointing in-house librarians. In the late-1980s LIANZA's predecessor (NZLIA) decided to formalise its SIGs structure and invited the NZLLG to participate within its organisational structure. This has continued via a very loose arrangement. The NZLLG has always operated outside the rules governing SIGs and, as a separately incorporated society with its own constitution, attracts members from a wide range of people working with legal information, not just law librarians. Many New Zealand law librarians do not see themselves as being a sub-set of the national body LIANZA, but instead view the relationship as more of a partnership.

Now the debate is open for further discussion and the future of the SIGs and the relationship such entities have with LIANZA is being re-examined. The NZLLG National Executive has been asked to provide information as to the way in which it operates, as other librarians see it as having achieved some innovative results. The NZLLG strongly believes in ensuring its members receive tangible benefits for the membership dollar. These include:

- **Law-lib:** The NZLLG established the law-lib discussion list as a means of facilitating better communication between group members in late 1996. It is an unmoderated list and is open to any interested parties including legal publishers. It is used for day to day communication, general administration and as a means of quickly passing information on to a large number of members. Members, and others, are encouraged to post meeting notices, general notices, agenda items and any library-related news. Law-lib was never intended to overshadow or override the purpose of the anz-law-librarians list and the NZLLG encourages people to continue using that list for research requests and so on. (Subscription details are available from the NZLLG website, see below).
- **National Executive meetings:** Monthly National Executive meetings are held, via audio-conference, in Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin. (These centres are where the majority of members work and reside) Anyone may attend these meetings usually hosted in each centre by the regional representative. The agenda is placed on law-lib some days prior to the meeting to allow everyone the opportunity to consider the issues for discussion, or add any further items. The medium takes a little getting used to but the ability to discuss, rather than email, some issues adds to the quality of decision making and allows all members the opportunity to participate
- **Strategic retreats:** A strategic retreat was held in Turangi, a small town in the centre of the North Island, in November 1996 to discuss the NZLLG's raison d'être and set some achievable goals and objectives for the following 2 years. (Turangi was chosen as North Island members could easily drive there and a nearby airport allowed South Island

members to fly in). By July 1998 all but one goal had been achieved, and that remaining goal is the relationship between the NZLLG and LIANZA, which is presently under wider discussion. Another strategic retreat is planned for November 1999 to refocus the group's direction once again.

- **Journal:** The *New Zealand Law Librarian* is produced quarterly and provides a platform for detailed articles and reports, publishers' news, product reviews etc. The present editor is Margaret Greville, the Law Librarian at the University of Canterbury in Christchurch. (m.greville@libr.canterbury.ac.nz)
- **Website:** The NZLLG website (www.knowledge-basket.co.nz/nzllg) was revamped for the 1998 conference and continues to be a source of news, membership contact details, links to legal information, and conference papers. Tina Mortensen, a librarian at the Law Library, University of Canterbury, now maintains it. (t.mortensen@libr.canterbury.ac.nz)
- **Regional events:** The regions hold meetings, host visiting speakers, have continuing education programmes and enjoy social gatherings.
- **Conferences:** NZLLG conferences are held every 2 years or so and planning is currently underway for the 2000 conference. Papers from the 1998 conference are available from the website.

New Zealand law librarians are becoming increasingly more visible to the wider legal community not just to internal clients. This is something we all believe is essential to ensure our futures, as we run cyber cafes and offer Internet training at the NZ Law Conferences, make submissions to select committees and some members participate in New Zealand Law Society seminars.

This is how the NZLLG offers tangible benefits to its members, which is why LIANZA is interested in learning more of the group's operation. We have no central office, utilise technology to ensure lines of open communications and manage to do all of this within a limited budget. How do we do it? A strong, vibrant and relevant NZLLG is dependent on the enthusiasm and will of its members. Much time is volunteered and given freely; sometimes, national funds will

partially subsidise events such as the retreat; sponsorship is actively sought and encouraged.

Some law librarians belong to both LIANZA and the NZLLG but see the NZLLG as their 'professional' body. No self-respecting New Zealand law librarian would not, not belong to the NZLLG but our non-law library colleagues do not hold that view of LIANZA for their professional development. They cannot see demonstrable benefits in belonging to LIANZA and until such benefits are obvious and tangible, membership levels will remain low. This debate will continue.

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