EXTERNAL FACTORS WHICH MAY IMPACT ON STAFF DEVELOPMENT IN LIBRARIES

Angela Bridgland

This paper explores some of the factors external to libraries which may influence their staff development programs. These fall into three broad groups:
- national training reform issues;
- industrial issues;
- strategic partnerships for delivery of quality programs.

These factors pose a challenge to library managers. The challenge is to design and implement staff development programs which are responsive to organisational and individual needs, but which are formulated in the context of the broader industrial and training arena.

Before examining each of these external factors, I would like to establish what I mean by the term staff development and why staff development is important. Bradley, Kallick and Regan (1991) state that staff development is:

> "...any systematic attempt to affect professional practices, beliefs and understandings of such persons towards an announced goal." (p.3)

For me, the important aspect of this definition is that training and development in libraries should be planned and developed in the context of the library's (and parent organisation's) goals. Staff development needs to be tied in with both action and strategic plans if it is to be effective.

Among the most prominent reasons given for the importance of staff development in the current literature is the need for library and information staff to be up-to-date.

> "The rate of change in information technology and its impact on libraries make it important for the recent graduate to realise that much of what was learned in professional library school will soon be obsolete." (Weingand 1991, p.266)

> "Social, technological, scientific and other forms of change are rendering knowledge and skills obtained at (initial training) obsolete at an increasingly rapid rate." (Roberts and Konn 1989 p. 11O)

Although obsolescence is a major factor, if used judiciously, staff development is vitally important in promoting high morale, a sense of self-worth and in providing career path opportunities for staff within libraries.

Awareness of the following external trends and issues inform a library and information manager's planning for staff development programs. Furthermore, the

introduction of competency standards for the industry may well have far reaching repercussions for the way in which staff development is delivered and assessed.

1. NATIONAL TRAINING REFORM ISSUES

As part of its microeconomic reform strategy, the federal government has set an agenda to reform training across all industry sectors and occupations. A vocational training and education system which is more responsive to industry needs is seen as being essential to improving Australia's productivity and its international competitiveness. The training reform agenda focuses on the development of a nationally consistent, competency-based approach to vocational education and training, with a focus on workplace training. It is designed to complement and support other microeconomic reform initiatives, especially labour market reform which is occurring through enterprise bargaining and workplace rearrangement. (Arts Training Victoria *Industry Training Plan* November, 1992, p. 14)

Key features of the national training reform agenda are the:

* introduction of flexible training pathways to meet individual and industry needs;
* transferability and portability of skills within/across industries, enhancing career path options;
* establishment of nationally recognised qualifications and course accreditation procedures;
* development of articulation and pathways between courses and institutions. *(Arts Training Australia: Update 1* Winter/Spring 1993)

The objectives of this change are to achieve:

1) a multi-skilled workforce;
2) improved career paths;
3) the development of closer links between industry and training/education providers;
4) a move to resource based learning (with obvious implications for information resource professionals such as librarians);
5) a focus on life-long learning and the recognition of prior learning (RPL);
6) the development of competency standards, which are designed to provide a basis for the recognition of outcomes acquired in formal programs and on-the-job training;
7) articulation between courses.

This national training reform is intended to operate on competency-based training and assessment systems. The Mayer Committee adopted a broad definition of competence which recognises that performance is underpinned not only by skill but also by knowledge and understanding, and that competence involves both the ability to perform in a given context and the capacity to transfer knowledge and skills to new tasks and situations.

(Putting General Education to Work October 1992).

Generic competencies are intended to be achieved by the time a person leaves secondary school. They are as follows:
1) Collecting, analysing and organising ideas and information.
2) Expressing ideas and information.
3) Planning and organising activities.
4) Working with others and in teams.
5) Using mathematical ideas and techniques.
6) Solving problems.
7) Using technology.
8) Cultural understanding.

Three levels of competencies have emerged from a set of generic competencies developed by the Mayer Committee. The three levels are developmental and each builds on the former.

The three levels of competency to emerge were:

- cross industry competencies;
- nationally identified competencies for each industry; and
- enterprise or workplace competencies.

The industry level competencies build on the generic competencies and address those areas of knowledge and skill which are industry specific. The cross industry competencies can be used by many industry sectors, e.g., training and assessment competencies. Enterprise competencies in turn, build on industry competencies and add any areas of knowledge or skill required specifically for that workplace.

The definition of competency used by The National Office for Overseas Standards Recognition (NOOSR) emphasises those factors which are more relevant to the professions.

> "The competence of professionals derives from their possessing a set of **relevant attributes** such as knowledge, abilities, skills and attitudes. These attributes which jointly underlie competence are often referred to as **competencies.** So a **competency** is a combination of attributes underlying some aspect of successful professional performance ... Specifying the standard involves stating the kinds of tasks and **context** in which the required level of achievement is to be exhibited." (NOOSR *Establishing Competency-based Standards in the Professions* Research Paper No1 p.9)

The development of competency standards for the library and information industry will be completed this year. Once the competencies have been endorsed by the National Training Board, libraries will have to consider their position in relation to competencies and competency based training.

WHAT IS COMPETENCY-BASED TRAINING (CBT)

Under CBT people receive recognition and certification as a result of demonstrated competence (outcomes) rather than on length of time spent in training (inputs). Why develop CBT?

Advantages for employers:

* clear outcomes are established;
* the training is directly related to the outcomes;
* people who can already do the job competently can be exempted from the training
* workforce skills will be improved more efficiently as a result of the focus of training;
* theory will be linked directly to practice.

Advantages for employees:

* training will be meaningful as it will relate directly to jobs;
* theory and practice will be combined;
* people can progress at their own pace;
* training can be built into career progression;
* credit can be gained for competencies achieved through practice and experience.

Uses to which competency standards may be put:

* in enterprise bargaining;
* clear statement of professional/technical work identity;
* tool to assist with recruitment;
* benchmark for training;
* identify skill and training gaps;
* identify training needs for industry/individuals;
* recognition of prior learning;
* development of career paths;
* articulation within or across industries;

THE AUSTRALIAN STANDARDS FRAMEWORK (ASF)

The National Training Board has developed a set of national benchmarks known as the Australian Standards Framework to reflect the competency levels relevant to industry and the workplace. The ASF provides a mechanism for comparing standards across occupations and industries. It also provides a basis for linking industry requirements to vocational education and training qualifications through a process of credentials reform. The ASF has eight competency levels which serve as reference points for the development and recognition of competency standards. The levels start at workforce entry levels and progress to senior professionals and managers. The main levels for our industry are levels 5-8, i.e., library technicians

and professional librarians.

The levels in the framework are listed below.

1) Entry level
2) Operative
3) Trade
4) Post-trade
5) Technician
6) Para-professional
7) Professional
8) Professional

THE NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE RECOGNITION OF TRAINING (NFROT)

The legal right to recognise courses and develop recognition guidelines for program design rests with the states. The NFROT is an agreement between the states to standardise the accreditation/recognition process. It is underpinned by the CBT system and specifies ten principles for course/program recognition. All courses submitted for accreditation must comply with the following ten principles:

Principle 1 - Identified Industry Training Need/Market Need
Accredited courses will be based on competency standards expected in employment. The Framework will draw on the expert advice of industry and educational bodies at both national and State/Territory levels about their training needs, These bodies play a major role in the accreditation of courses.

Principle 2 - Course Standards Appropriate To The Requirements Of The Particular Credential
The accreditation process ensures that the quality of courses and the standard of credentials are maintained. The standard of the course must match both the credential offered and national guidelines on tertiary award courses,

Principle 3 - Competency-Based Training
All courses must focus on competencies. Courses must include any national competencies endorsed by the National Training Board, where they exist.

Principle 4 - Multiple Entry And Exit
Accredited courses must recognise prior learning and enable learners to enter and exit the course at various points.

Principle 5 - Flexible Learning
Learning may taken place in a variety of different environments, Alternative delivery modes must be indicated.

Principle 6 - Articulation

Courses submitted for accreditation must show how they relate to other courses and include provisions for credit transfer to other relevant courses.

Principle 7 - Customisation of Courses
Courses shall be capable of being adapted to meet the particular needs of the industry, individuals and other educational institutions.

Principle 8 - Promote Access and Participation
Accredited courses must be accessible to everyone, regardless of age, gender, social or educational background. Where possible, prior learning will be recognised and bridging programs will be available to overcome barriers such as limited education or a non-English speaking background.

Principle 9 - Appropriate Assessment
Assessment methods must be carefully designed to measure the attainment of competencies, and ultimately, the successful completion of a course.

Principle 10 - Ongoing Monitoring and Evaluation
Accredited courses will be monitored and evaluated regularly.
(Nationally Recognised Training - Bringing It Together, p. 10).

ASSESSMENT

NFROT sets out five principles for assessment.

Principle 1 - Competency-Based Training
Assessment will measure whether competencies have been gained. These competencies will be developed with input from industry and endorsed by the National Training Board.

Principle 2 - Flexibility in Approach
Assessment may include methods such as practical exercises, written tests, computer-generated tests, and where applicable:
* interviews;
* portfolios;
* employer reports;
* written assignments;

Principle 3 - Validity
Assessment methods must actually measure what they say they measure. For example, an essay alone would be an inappropriate method of assessment for measuring practical panel beating skills.

Principle 4 - Reliability
This means that any trained assessor would reach the same conclusions about a person's achievement of a particular competency.

Principle 5 - Recognition of prior learning

Provision must be made for the recognition of prior learning.
(Nationally Recognised Training - Bringing It Together, p. 11).

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL)

NFROT also sets out principles for the recognition of prior learning.

Principle 1 - Competence

The recognition of prior learning will focus on the competencies a person has acquired as a result of both formal and informal training and experience - not how, when or where the learning occurred.

Principle 2 - Commitment

It is important that training providers have a commitment to recognising the prior learning of individuals. This will ensure that individuals will not have to duplicate their training unnecessarily.

Principle 3 - Access

Every individual may have his or her prior learning recognised.

Principle 4 - Fairness

All participants must be confident that the recognition of prior learning process is fair.

Principle 5 - Support

Individuals applying for recognition of prior learning must be given adequate support. Personnel involved in the assessment process must be trained to support applicants so that an efficient and effective service is maintained.
(Nationally Recognised Training - Bringing It Together, p. 11)

2. INDUSTRIAL ISSUES

Library and information managers keep abreast of numerous industrial issues but two which are of particular importance for staff development are award restructuring and enterprise bargaining.

AWARD RESTRUCTURING

The purpose of award restructuring is to overhaul industrial awards to do away with outmoded provisions, and to make them more relevant and appropriate to the needs of modern industry and workers. Three priorities of the restructuring process are:

- the revision of job classification structures;
- multi-skilling;
- provision of new career paths, underpinned by major reforms to skill formation and training arrangements.

Other issues such as better use of technology, improvements to work organisation, working patterns and payment systems are also addressed. The focus varies with the needs of various industries.

Labour market reform is a key ingredient of the Federal Government's strategy to make Australian industry more productive, more competitive, and more capable of generating longer term economic growth, while at the same time expanding opportunities for individual workers and improving the quality of work life. The structural efficiency principle (SEP), which underpins award restructuring, requires unions and employers to reach agreement on measures to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of their industry. It also means that everyone in the industry who is subject to an award will be required to undergo continual training throughout their career if they wish to advance. The way in which SEP has been introduced into the Library at the University of Melbourne has stressed staff participation and collaborative decision making. The process is about change in the workplace and, where it has been implemented, it has made the work units more productive and efficient. The benefits have included increased job satisfaction, reduced job stress and greater interest in and responsibility for the work.

ENTERPRISE BARGAINING

This moves the focus from industry-wide awards to actual enterprise or workplace level. It has been argued that only by improving the performance of each worksite will true microeconomic reform occur. An enterprise is usually taken to mean a single business with a single employer.

Enterprise bargaining allows all employment conditions and work practices to be reviewed at a local level. It encourages management and their employees to take full responsibility for their own arrangements. They are expected to work out together what changes are necessary to improve the productivity of their organisation. Enterprise bargaining does allow for wholesale change but it must take place within a legal framework. It is now included in the laws of all six States and the Commonwealth.
(ALIA *Enterprise Bargaining and Workplace Reform: understanding Australia's new industrial relations system*. Canberra: ALIA, 1993 p. 2-3)

What Is Negotiable?
Enterprise bargaining is intended to open up a wide range of employment matters for negotiation. But every system is bound by legal minimum standards which an enterprise agreement must at least match. So while enterprise bargaining can produce conditions above the minimum, it cannot reduce the minimum terms

prescribed by law. Areas commonly negotiated in enterprise bargaining are:

• **Salaries**
Minimum rates of pay which apply in any award replaced by an enterprise agreement cannot be reduced. Except in Victoria, such minimum rates will still increase as the award rates change over time even after an enterprise agreement has replaced the award for all other purposes. In Victoria, only the award wage at 28 February 1993 must be maintained.

• **Working Hours**
The standard working hours provided under legislation cannot be increased. Employees working more than standard hours are entitled to overtime.

• **Annual Leave**
All employees in Australia - except casual workers - are entitled to four weeks annual leave by legislation and they must be paid their ordinary wages when taking it. An enterprise agreement cannot reduce annual leave entitlement. Annual leave loading is not guaranteed and may be removed or amended by negotiation.

• **Long-service Leave**
All permanent employees qualify for long-service leave after serving a prescribed period which varies between different States and Territories. Entitlements for casual employees are complex and eligibility is doubtful in some parts of Australia. Enterprise bargaining could produce changes to some of the arrangements for taking long-service leave but the level of entitlement cannot be varied.

• **Sick Leave**
All employees except casuals are guaranteed a minimum one week sick leave entitlement by law. A right to accumulate untaken leave usually applies. General arrangements concerning the taking of sick leave are open to negotiation but the minimum entitlement may not be varied in enterprise agreements.

• **Parental Leave**
Parental leave remains a guaranteed right for employees under enterprise agreements. Provided they have worked for their employer for a continuous 12 - month period, employees are entitled to up to 12 months maternity, paternity or adoption leave. Leave can extend up to a year after the birth or adoption of the child.

• **Superannuation**
Superannuation payments by employers are now compulsory under the Superannuation Guarantee Levy. Employees' rights to have these payments made on their behalf cannot be removed in enterprise agreements.
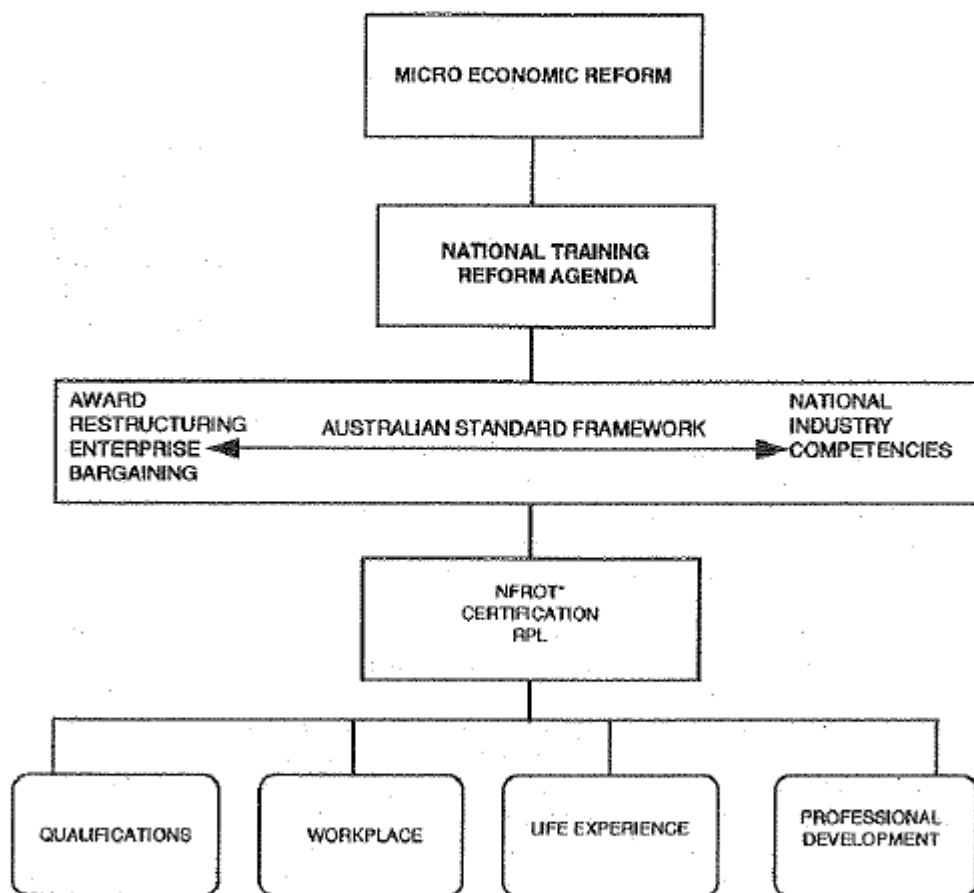
• **Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)**
EEO legislation is in place in most States and Territories. Enterprise bargaining cannot displace it. Under Constitutional law, the Federal Sex Discrimination Act,

Racial Discrimination Act and Disability Discrimination Act override State laws and apply throughout the country.
(*Enterprise bargaining and workplace reform: understanding Australia's new industrial relations system* p.4-5).
Training may well be used as a point of negotiation too.

The following diagram provides a summary of the interrelationships of the external factors which may impinge on staff development and training.

```
            ┌─────────────────────────────┐
            │   MICRO ECONOMIC REFORM     │
            └──────────────┬──────────────┘
                           │
            ┌──────────────┴──────────────┐
            │     NATIONAL TRAINING       │
            │      REFORM AGENDA          │
            └──────────────┬──────────────┘
                           │
┌──────────────────────────┴──────────────────────────────┐
│ AWARD                                        NATIONAL    │
│ RESTRUCTURING   AUSTRALIAN STANDARD FRAMEWORK INDUSTRY   │
│ ENTERPRISE ◄──────────────────────────────► COMPETENCIES│
│ BARGAINING                                               │
└──────────────────────────┬──────────────────────────────┘
                           │
                 ┌─────────┴─────────┐
                 │      NFROT*       │
                 │   CERTIFICATION   │
                 │      RPL          │
                 └─────────┬─────────┘
         ┌──────────┬──────┴──────┬──────────┐
  ┌──────┴───┐ ┌────┴────┐ ┌──────┴───┐ ┌────┴─────┐
  │QUALIFI-  │ │WORKPLACE│ │LIFE      │ │PROFES-   │
  │CATIONS   │ │         │ │EXPERIENCE│ │SIONAL    │
  │          │ │         │ │          │ │DEVELOP-  │
  │          │ │         │ │          │ │MENT      │
  └──────────┘ └─────────┘ └──────────┘ └──────────┘
```

* NFROT = NATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE RECOGNITION OF TRAINING

3. STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS FOR DELIVERY OF QUALITY STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Employers, employees, registered providers, tertiary institutions and professional associations can all play a role in determining staff development training needs. Partnerships among these providers can ensure the design and delivery of quality training and development products. Some examples are as follows:

- The focus in the national training reform agenda on **workplace** training has implications for the quality of our training and assessment procedures. As yet we have no competency standards to use as benchmarks. There are, however, separately developed competency standards for workplace trainers and assessors. How we in libraries might use these is yet to be determined.
- Staff development programs should not only be of high standard vis a vis their content, relevance, delivery etc. but should also consider embracing the NFROT principles as well as adult learning theory.
- ALIA, the Australian Library and Information Association, has professional development as one of its major priorities in its strategic plan. Apart from provision of training packages which may also be useful for staff development, it is negotiating with the Library Association (UK) to modify its *Framework for professional development* to meet the NFROT principles. ALIA is also looking to incorporate NFROT principles into all its new professional development activities. This means that when the competency standards are developed, they, too, will be taken into account in program design. ALIA is also keen to develop strategic partnerships with relevant course providers, e.g., ALMA, to deliver quality training programs.

The external factors discussed above provide the backdrop against which library managers from all sectors must consider provision of staff development in their libraries. The challenge is to devise programs which enable greater skilling and enhance the attainment of the library's strategic goals whilst avoiding a breach of the work requirements of the various classifications. Perhaps this will be easier when there are acceptable competency standards for the profession.

In the meantime, those responsible for the design of staff development in libraries must adopt a position of creative diplomacy in order to multi-skill their staff without compromising work standards. The performance appraisal process and the application of Total Quality Management to work practices can provide a useful platform for this. Furthermore, staff development managers will have to design career paths which remove barriers to moving progressively through a classification structure. What is the point if the only career structure open to library technicians is to qualify as a librarian? They should not have to change their emphasis in order to gain promotion. Similarly, not all librarians want, or are suited to management positions. In any case, as flatter organisational structures replace more hierarchical ones, there will be fewer management positions for library technicians and librarians to take. There need to be alternative career paths for professional and technical specialists to take that encourage them to remain within their areas of expertise. To be attractive, these alternatives will either need to

pay well, provide more job satisfaction, or both. This may also involve changing the way library staff view their careers, how successful they are and their value to the organisation. This, too, has implications for staff development.

4.   CONCLUSION

Staff development policy can be used as an organisational mechanism for continually examining and improving individual and organisational effectiveness, engaging all staff, regardless of career stage, in processes which bring into question organisational values, goals and courses of action. Such an attitude towards staff development would emphasise workplace learning and collaboration, and would be integrated with both operational and strategic planning and decision making. Such policy would allow libraries to better cope with the environment of change and uncertainty as it would provide opportunities to affirm or challenge existing beliefs and practices within the library.

Staff development policy is designed for staff to develop shared understandings of organisational practices, as a precursor to widespread improvement. To be effective, staff development policy should embrace the following propositions:

- learning is a vital element of organisational life as organisations of all kinds face and must cope with environments of unprecedented change;
- libraries, in order to respond to volatile circumstances, should be "learning organisations";
- for a learning organisation, both individual and organisational learning are needed they are interrelated and interdependent.

At the enterprise level, achievement of operational and strategic plans rely on well conceived staff development programs. The philosophy underpinning the structural efficiency principle and the national training reform agenda should inform the design, implementation and evaluation of training programs for all library staff.

Angela Bridgland
Director, Management Services
University of Melbourne

EXTERNAL FACTORS WHICH MAY IMPACT ON STAFF DEVELOPMENT IN LIBRARIES

REFERENCES

Arts Training Australia *Update 1*, Sydney: ATA, Winter/Spring, 1993.

Bradley, Marjorie K.; Kallick, Bena 0 and Regan, Helen B. *The Staff Development Managers: a guide to professional growth.* Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1991.

Enterprise Bargaining and Workplace Reform: understanding Australia's new industrial relations system. Canberra: ALIA, 1993.

Framework for Continuing Professional Development. London: Library Association, 1993.

Nationally Recognised Training : Bringing It Together. (NFROT). Canberra: VEETAC, 1992.

NOOSR Establishing Competency-based Standards in the Professions. Research Paper No.1. Canberra: DEET, December, 1990.

Putting General Education to Work. Canberra :AEC/MOVEET, October, 1992 (Mayer Report 3).

Roberts, Norman and Konn, Tania. *Librarians and Professional Status: continuing professional development and academic libraries.* London: Library Association, 1991.

Weingand, Darlene E. "The Continuum of Library Education: maintaining competence through the professional worklife". *IFLA Journal* 17 (3), p. 266-273

EXTERNAL FACTORS WHICH MAY IMPACT ON STAFF DEVELOPMENT IN LIBRARIES

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The Australian Vocational Certificate Training System. Canberra: Employment and Skills Formation Council, NBEET, March 1992 (Carmichael Report).

Bowden, John A. and Masters, Geoffrey N. *Implications for Higher Education of a Competency-based Approach to Education and Training.* Canberra: DEET, June 1993.

Bridgland, Angela "Award Restructuring, the Training Guarantee Act and Staff Development". *The Australian Library Journal* 42 (3), p. 205-213.

Goodacre, Christine et al. *The Competency Based Education and Training (CBET) Movement in Australia.* Kit produced for ALIA. Canberra: ALIA, 1993.

Competency-based Training: How to make it work for you. Melbourne: Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 1992.

Competency Standards - Assessors. Melbourne: Competency Standards Body - Assessors and Workplace Trainers, 1993.

Employment-related Key Competencies for Postcompulsory Education and Training. (Executive Summary and Discussion paper in separate volumes) AEC/MOVEET January,1992 (Mayer Discussion Paper 1).

Employment-related Key Competencies: a proposal for consultation. AECIMOVEET May 1992 (Mayer Discussion paper 2).

Enterprise Bargaining and Workplace Reform: issues for library and information workers. Canberra: ALIA, 1993.

National Competency Standards: policy and guidelines. 2nd. ed. Canberra: National Training Board, 1992.

NOOSR *Competency-based Assessment in the Professions.* Research Paper No.2. Canberra: DEET, December 1990.

NOOSR *The Development of Competency-based Assessment Strategies for the Professions.* Research Paper No. 8 Canberra: DEET, June 1993.

What Competency Standards for the Library and Information Services Industry Means to You. Canberra: ALIA, 1993.

Workplace Trainer Competency Standards Melbourne: Competency Standards Body Assessors and Workplace Trainers, 1992.

Young People's Participation in Post-compulsory Education and Training. Report of the Australian Education Council Review Committee, July 1991 (Report and Overview in separate volumes) (Finn Report).