

ISANA Life Membership Nomination – 2013

Sylvia Lewohl joined ISANA in 1990 and became known as the 'Accommodation and Homestay' expert for the organisation for many, many years whilst also fulfilling the role of the Queensland Branch President for four of those years.

State Contribution:

Sylvia's years as QLD President was distinguished by active collaboration with different sectors of government: Queensland Education and Training International (QETI); Education Queensland International (EQI) for government schools; and the Independent Schools sector. These collaborations led to the development of the "The Guide to Homestay" workshop which was adopted by ISANA and presented by Sylvia as a pre-conference workshop at the ISANA National Conferences in Sydney and Adelaide in 2006 and 2007 respectively.

On behalf of ISANA, Sylvia presented at various Government and Independent Schools conferences on both homestay and Under 18's issues and presented the ISANA Critical Incident workshop to QLD government representatives in six locations across Queensland.

As part of her collaboration with the government, Sylvia was invited to work with the Commission for Children, Young People and Child Guardian (CCYPCG) for her expertise in the homestay and Under 18's areas of international education. During her time with the CCYPCG, she developed a risk management policy document to be used as a guideline for all homestay environments in Queensland which is still in use today.

At State Branch level, Sylvia was an advocate for regional campuses and the staff members who worked with international students in these regional locations. In combination with the ISANA Communications Manager, she developed a strategy to include North Queensland ISANA delegates in ISANA QLD Branch activities and professional development.

National Contribution:

At national level, Sylvia developed policies, procedures and workshops for ISANA on safe homestay accommodation and was the inaugural convenor of the Accommodation Special Interest Group that later specialised in homestay. As Chair of this Special Interest Group, she presented "Working Together to Build Homestay Solutions" as a pre-conference workshop at the 2008 National Conference; "Homestay Issues and Outcomes" as a pre-conference workshop at the 2010 National Conference and "Homestay for Middle Eastern Students" workshops at both state and national level at a time when settlement issues amongst this student cohort were critical. This Special Interest Group has continued to thrive from the base that Sylvia inaugurally developed and has become a model of best practice for stakeholder engagement for ISANA's Special Interest Groups.

Conference presentations delivered by Sylvia encompassed core areas of homestay and were always well-attended and valued by delegates. Such conference presentations included risk management and quality assurance in 1998; legal aspects of homestay in 1999; insurance issues and solutions in 2000; and international student safety in 2009.

Sylvia was awarded the inaugural ISANA award for an outstanding contribution to the organisation in 2006 – an award that is still treasured by her to this day. She attended all ISANA conferences from 1990-2010 as a regular contributor and valued delegate – that's every Conference for twenty years! Sylvia encompasses the 'true ISANA spirit' to which many

of us aspire – a collegial, sharing approach amongst education professionals for the betterment of the international student experience.