



EVERY MEMBER AN ADVOCATE **ALIA's year of advocacy 2010**

1. Overview of ALIA's advocacy activities

ALIA's national office has led the drive to raise the profile of libraries on the federal and state government agenda, especially in the areas of education, social inclusion, disability, broadband and communication.

- At the federal level, ALIA has put the case for libraries – public, school, academic and special – and the role of information professionals, direct to senior government figures.
- At the state level, ALIA has lobbied governments to maintain their investment in public libraries and has helped rally the media around state/territory-based campaigns.

ALIA has supported library leaders from all sectors by providing training, advice and resources to help members create their own advocacy and lobbying campaigns.

Over the past 12 months, under the presidencies of Jan Richards and Graham Black, ALIA has run the Every Member An Advocate campaign. This campaign has not only drawn attention to the importance of advocacy by all ALIA members on behalf of the profession; it has also involved the development of tangible assets, with a new guide to advocacy and lobbying, evidence, statistics and case studies available to download from the website (<http://www.alia.org.au/advocacy>).

Sector research and submissions prepared by the ALIA team can also be found on the website and they provide useful information which can be adapted by members to make the case for their library and information service. Recent topics include cybersafety, social inclusion and the electronic distribution of the Parliamentary Papers series. These submissions are available to download at <http://www.alia.org.au/advocacy/submissions>.

2. Lobbying activities and achievements

2.1 School libraries

In partnership with ASLA, ALIA has made a significant contribution to the House of Representatives' Inquiry into School Libraries and Teacher Librarians. ALIA's submission was highly regarded by the Select Committee and Executive Director Sue Hutley was twice called upon to give evidence.

In recent months, ALIA and ASLA have helped unite all the school library related organisations, arranging an unprecedented gathering of more than 20 representatives from every state and territory in Brisbane in November 2010.

And to round this off, ALIA's lobbying expertise has helped persuade the federal government of the urgent need to complete the inquiry, which stalled when the federal election was announced in July 2010.

2.2 Public libraries

ALIA supported public libraries in WA in their successful stand against proposed budget cuts by the state government back in April 2010.

It has also assisted Public Libraries SA to generate media coverage about the proposed South Australian Government cut in funding to public libraries, which was revealed in the budget announcement in September 2010.

2.3 Safer Internet Group

ALIA has supported libraries' stand against government-imposed mandatory ISP level internet filtering by joining with Google, Yahoo! and other high profile partners to form the Safer Internet Group. The association, represented by Executive Director Sue Hutley, has had a seat at the table in some of the intense discussions which have taken place with the Department of Broadband, Communication and the Digital Economy.

2.4 National Broadband Network

Relationships with politicians and advisors to Communications Minister Stephen Conroy have been further developed as a result of ALIA's lobbying activities to ensure that public libraries are recognised as key partners in the delivery of the National Broadband Network.

Executive Director Sue Hutley was one of the keynote speakers at the influential CSIRO Broadband for Society Summit in Hobart in November 2010.

2.5 Federal election

During the run up to the federal election in August 2010, ALIA produced a campaign kit, which included questions for the political parties and template letters to MPs and opposition candidates. Feedback suggested that there was a strong take up among library leaders, especially those representing a broader interest group, for example the state-based public library associations.

2.6 Book Industry Strategy Group

ALIA has ensured that the views of library and information professionals have been considered at every stage of the emergence of the Book Industry Strategy Group. The group had no formal place for a library representative when it was formed at the beginning of the year, but in the intervening months, ALIA has moved from observer status to the role of active participant in the debate.

3. Every Member An Advocate

3.1 Professional Development

During 2010, there were 19 Every Member An Advocate workshops, held in 10 locations around the country: Adelaide, Brisbane, Cairns, Canberra, Darwin, Hobart, Melbourne, Orange, Perth and Sydney.

The three-hour workshops were free for members (\$50 for non-members) and in every location there was excellent feedback about the format and content. The scores on the evaluation sheets averaged out over all the workshops were:

Program and content	90% satisfaction
Duration	88% satisfaction
Workshop format	88% satisfaction
Organisational aspects	90% satisfaction

Some comments about what people liked best:

- “The discussion with other librarians and sharing of ideas and real-life examples”
- “The explanation of the difference between advocacy and lobbying and also the practical elements of getting key messages down”
- “The balance between working together as one large group and in smaller groups”
- “Networking, bouncing ideas, trying to problem-solve”
- “The simplicity of the workshop”
- “Practical tips and ways to improve advocacy and lobbying in organisations”
- “Learning about the best tactics”
- “The opportunity to discuss other people’s situations”

In total, 310 registrations were received for the 19 workshops, giving an average of 16 participants per session. After each workshop, the course materials were forwarded electronically to participants for them to share with their colleague. In this way, far more library and information professionals benefited from the professional development opportunity.

3.2 Resources

Throughout the year, new resources were added to the ALIA website (<http://www.alia.org.au/advocacy>). The main items were:

- The Every Member An Advocate kit, including facts, figures and useful quotes
- Case studies of lobbying campaigns for school libraries, public library funding in WA and the Safer Internet Group
- The *ALIA Guide to Advocacy and Lobbying for Library and Information Organisations* briefing paper and workshop handout
- *Valued*, a report describing ways to build a business case around the return on investment of library and information services
- *Public Libraries: A Surprise on Every Page*, a catalogue of nearly 60 examples of best practice and innovation in Australian public libraries

There have also been regular items in *InCite*, culminating in a 4-page pull-out in the November 2010 issue.

3.3 Advice

ALIA has offered members an advocacy email and telephone helpline during 2010. Although contact from members has been infrequent, those who have used the service have valued the advice they have received.

4. Advocacy backdrop

4.1 Advocacy events

Throughout the year, ALIA has provided members with readymade opportunities to advocate for their libraries and the library and information profession. Library Lovers Day, Library and Information Week, National Simultaneous Storytime, Information Awareness Month and the Summer Reading Club are annual, national campaigns which provide a useful angle for generating awareness, appreciation and further goodwill.

Advocacy has been a theme at other events, including the ALIA Access 2010 conference in Brisbane in September and the IFLA world conference in Gothenburg in August, where Executive Director Sue Hutley gave a keynote speech about ALIA's Every Member An Advocate campaign.

In 2010, ALIA became one of the founder partners of the National Year of Reading, which will provide valuable opportunities for highlighting the role and importance of libraries with government and potential funding agencies in 2012.

4.2 Collaboration

ALIA has recognised the strength of multiple voices conveying the same message and to this end has actively sought partnerships with other organisations in the library field. In May 2010, ALIA hosted a roundtable for senior representatives of these other bodies to discuss the compelling issues for Australian Libraries.

ALIA also has its own National Partnerships Standing Committee, bringing together key players in the sector for quarterly teleconferences.

5. Further information

Find out more about how ALIA lobbying initiatives and the Every Member An Advocate campaign on the website <http://www.alia.org.au/advocacy>.