



Australian Library and Information Association

CAMPAIGN KIT

for library and information professionals

Federal Election 2010

Every Member an Advocate

July 2010

Let's make our voices heard

One of ALIA's guiding principles is to promote the free flow of information and ideas in the interest of all Australians and a thriving culture, economy and democracy.

There is the opportunity for a new federal government, of whatever political persuasion, to be the first in Australian history to take advantage of the unique position of libraries of every kind to make major social, educational and economic advances.

The library and information profession has a great story to tell – the challenge is to make our voices heard.



Lobbying (v): to try to influence the actions of public officials, especially legislators.



Thank you...

ALIA wishes to thank the valuable financial contribution and expert advice from their members in the preparation of this Campaign Kit.

Not an ALIA Member?

If you would like to benefit from the extensive members only advocacy and lobbying resources available from ALIA, please visit:

<http://www.alia.org.au/membership.benefits>



Australian
Library and
Information
Association

Key Messages

ALIA has researched political priorities and discovered 10 recurring themes.

Not all will be relevant to your library or information role, but they are:

1. Contributing to the nation's economic prosperity
2. Promoting and maintaining the good health of our citizens
3. Providing lifelong learning, skills and literacy support
4. Encouraging digital citizenship and boosting the digital economy
5. Broadening social inclusion, promoting fairness and participation
6. Building safer, stronger communities and brokering community partnerships
7. Improving well-being, creating opportunities and enhancing life chances
8. Supporting families and family relationships
9. Celebrating our indigenous heritage and diverse multi-cultural society
10. Responding to the need for an environmentally sustainable Australia

Action Plan

1 Find out more about your local candidates

Australian Democrats <http://www.democrats.org.au>

Australian Greens <http://greens.org.au>

1 Australian Labor Party <http://www.alp.org.au>

Liberal Party <http://www.liberal.org.au>

One Nation <http://www.onenational.com.au>

The Nationals <http://nationalparty.org>

2 Write a letter to your MP and candidates

Highlighting the key issues. You can use the ALIA template letter on pages 7 and 8 of this kit as a starting point, and chose from the priority issues in this document.

3 Make an appointment to meet your MP and/or candidates

4 Attend election events and be ready with your key messages and questions

5 Vote for the candidate that best represents your interests

Resources

There's lots of information on the ALIA website at <http://www.alia.org.au>, including:

- Submissions on key topics at <http://www.alia.org.au/advocacy/submissions/> and <http://www.alia.org.au/summit09/>
- Online content regulation <http://www.alia.org.au/advocacy/internet.access/>
- Public Libraries <http://www.alia.org.au/publiclibraries>
- School libraries <http://www.alia.org.au/schoollibraries>
- National Broadband strategy <http://www.alia.org.au/advocacy/broadband.html>
- Public sector information <http://www.alia.org.au/advocacy/publications.government.html>
- Privacy <http://www.alia.org.au/advocacy/privacy.html>
- Copyright <http://www.alia.org.au/advocacy/copyright/>
- *The Little Book of Public Libraries* - download the electronic version or order copies from <http://www.alia.org.au/publiclibraries/>

ALIA's Top 10 Lobbying Priorities

1 National Digitisation Strategy

Issue:

Across the developed world, cultural institutions – in particular libraries and archives – are digitising their collections of books, newspapers, historic documents and images, to make them more readily accessible for the current population and to preserve them for future generations. Internationally, governments and cultural agencies are working together to make heritage collections more widely available online and to make their records searchable.

The Australian voice and cultural identity risks being lost on the internet by other cultures and nations unless there is significant investment in unique Australian content.

In Australia, a country that has a strong sense of cultural

identity, there is no national policy or strategy for digitising Australian collections. Using a volunteer workforce, the National Library of Australia has led the way with its newspaper digitisation project, and there are more modest state-based initiatives, but what is needed is federal government backing.

Call to action:

We call on the political parties to commit to developing a national digitisation strategy and to put the funding in place for the nation's most treasured resources to be permanently preserved.

2 National Early Childhood Literacy Initiative

Issue:

Literacy is the difference between educational success and failure; employment and unemployment; social inclusion and social exclusion.

By the time children get to school, it is too late. Five-year-olds from homes with books, whose parents have read to them from birth, already have a significant learning advantage over those from homes without a reading culture. In fact, the critical period is from birth to three years of age.

There are excellent early literacy programs in some states, which have put books in the hands of babies and toddlers, and opened parents' eyes to the benefits of reading. However, provision across the nation is patchy. Simply by introducing a 'books from birth' program in Australia,

similar to that developed in the UK, and adopted in Japan and New Zealand, the federal government could make a step-change in the literacy levels of future generations – this against a backdrop of research that shows that 46% of Australians aged 15-74 don't have the prose literacy skills they need to meet the everyday needs of life and work.¹

Call to action:

We call on the political parties to support a national early literacy initiative, building on what is happening at the state and local level and making it possible for every newborn Australian to have an equal chance of reading success.

¹ Adult Literacy and Life Skills Survey of Australians, Australian Bureau of Statistics (2006)

3 Public libraries as Partners in the National Broadband Network

Issue:

There are some 9400 PCs in public libraries, of which 7800 are connected to the internet. Public libraries are the key providers of free internet access for many people who do not have access at home or through school and work. There has been a huge increase in the usage of PCs in libraries. ALIA's Internet Access in Public Libraries Survey (2008) revealed a 91% increase over 2005 figures, in users accessing the internet each week through public libraries.

Despite the fact that many Australians see libraries as technology hotspots, there is a danger of federal

government overlooking libraries' potential to be a major partner in the roll out of the National Broadband Network.

Call to action:

We call on the political parties to recognise the crucial role of public libraries in the implementation and development of the National Broadband Network and to work with the public library system to ensure that library staff are trained to deliver the level of support required by the Australian people.

ALIA's Top 10 Lobbying Priorities

4 Base Level Of Provision Of Electronic Resources

Issue:

Access to electronic resources varies from library to library. There is no base level of provision of online databases, magazines, journals and so on, for every Australian. If this were in place, it would have the potential to provide those who live in rural and remote Australia with the same level of access to information as those who live in urban and metropolitan areas.

Electronic Resources Australia (ERA) was established in 2007 to negotiate with suppliers of online information

for favourable terms for Australian libraries, establishing economies of scale through a consortium approach.

Call to action:

We call on the political parties to develop their statement of an Australian's right to free electronic resources through libraries and to fund the implementation of this strategy through ERA.

5 National Year of Reading

Issue:

Nearly half the population struggles without the literacy skills to meet the most basic demands of everyday life and work. There are 46% of Australians who can't read newspapers; follow a recipe; make sense of timetables; or understand the instructions on a medicine bottle.

This means that more than four out of every 10 Australians lack a life skill and we are missing an important opportunity to break the cycle of disadvantage.

Australian libraries and library associations are behind a campaign to turn 2012 into the National Year of Reading,

linking together all the great things that are already happening around books, reading and literacy, and giving them an extra boost, with fun programs and activities taking place across the country. The concept is based on the National Year of Reading in the UK in 2008.

Call to action:

We call on the political parties to endorse, support and contribute to the funding of the National Year of Reading 2012.

6 Recognising The Potential Of Public Libraries

Issue:

As public libraries are managed at local and state level, they have not been seen by federal government as having a national role. This has meant that:

- State governments have not been held to account for under-investment in public libraries
- There have been lost opportunities to deliver appropriate nationally-funded initiatives through the public library network
- The federal government has not taken advantage of a nationwide network whose core users are described by other agencies as 'hard-to-reach'

- There has been duplication of effort by public library services in different states and territories, for example in terms of research, program development and better practice.

Call to action:

We call on the political parties to support a national early literacy initiative, building on what is happening at the state and local level and making it possible for every newborn Australian to have an equal chance of reading success.

7 Cybersafety

Issue:

For ALIA and Australia's library and information services, together with the support for freedom of information and unhindered access to electronic information resources, comes the need to exercise due care in the provision of information.

The role of Australia's libraries, in particular school and public libraries, should be recognised as important stakeholders in the promotion of a safer experience online for all Australians.

Libraries and information services proactively promote and facilitate responsible access to quality networked information for all their users, including children and young people.

ALIA endorses and supports effective, practical and appropriate measures that assist Australians to manage their use of the internet. We believe that cybersafety education is one of the most effective strategies to manage content issues. Adequate funding of cybersafety education

for children and parents should be a major component of the Government's policy on online safety.

The key to protecting children online is education, empowerment, supervision, and technology solutions informed by research and consultation. A national coordinated approach that includes research, cybersafety education, effective policing of illegal content and appropriate technology solutions is required to meet the challenges of online harassment and security issues.

Call to action:

We call on the political parties to recognise the role of libraries in promoting cybersafety and to provide funding for a national, comprehensive cybersafety education program for children, parents and the community with public libraries and school libraries as the mechanism for reaching these communities

ALIA's Top 10 Lobbying Priorities

8 Internet Filtering

Issue:

ALIA has continually discussed why internet filtering is a form of censorship and goes against our core value of freedom of access to information as a right of a democratic society. In 2010, ALIA joined with The Safer Internet Group (SIG) to again oppose the introduction of mandatory ISP-level internet filtering, which was proposed by the government in December 2009. ALIA was a co-founder of SIG, along with other key stakeholders such as Google, Yahoo! and the Inspire Foundation.

After a public hearing on 8 July, at which ALIA Executive Director Sue Hutley spoke out on behalf of SIG members, on 9 July, the government announced a new approach, which

was more transparent and accountable. SIG welcomed this move by Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy and agreed that Australia needed to take effective action to ensure that internet users, and particularly children, had a safe experience online, while preserving the benefits of open internet access for all Australians.

Call to action:

We call on the political parties to not filter the internet in Australia and support free speech.

9 School Libraries

Issue:

ALIA has welcomed the federal government's 2010 Inquiry into School Libraries and Teacher Librarians in Australian Schools. Our key principle is that there should be a teacher librarian in every Australian school in order to achieve the best educational and social outcomes for all young Australians, and to ensure their lifelong participation in the Australian economy, culture and society.

School libraries must be staffed by qualified teacher librarians, who can help students attain higher levels of academic achievement; inspire and support literacy and reading, and play an important role in teaching - teaching information and digital literacy skills and partnering with teachers to resource, enrich and expand the curriculum.

Having access to a well resourced school library and the

services of a fully trained and qualified teacher librarian is the right of every student in an Australian school. The provision of the school library facility and the employment of a qualified teacher librarian in every school is the responsibility of the federal and state governments of Australia, and is in the national interest.

Call to action:

We call on the political parties to recognise the important role played by teacher librarians and to commit to the principle of a fully trained and qualified teacher librarian in every school.

10 Public Sector Information

Issue:

ALIA believes that government information is a national resource to be developed and preserved in the public interest. The public has a right of access to government information and agencies should guarantee open and timely access to government information regardless of format.

New technologies and developments in e-government have thrown up new challenges relating to the creation, use and dissemination of government publications and information.

ALIA is working with other key organisations to advocate for effective, long-term access to government publications and information, regardless of format. ALIA is concerned

with the dissemination of government information; the publishing, distribution, and bibliographical control of and access to government publications, both paper based and electronic; and the continuation of the principle of free access to government information through libraries.

Call to action:

We call on the political parties to support and invest in making government publications and information available to the Australian public over time. This includes both access to print and the preservation and archiving of websites and online content.

Questions for Candidates

July 2010

1

Does your party recognise the value of a national digitisation strategy? How will your party ensure there is an Australian voice and cultural identity on the internet?

2

What is your party's reaction to the fact that 46% of Australians aged 15-74 do not have the prose literacy skills that are needed for everyday life and work?

3

Does your party believe in the benefits of a national early childhood literacy initiative for Australian under-fives?

4

Will your party endorse, support and contribute to the funding of the National Year of Reading 2012?

5

What role does your party envisage that libraries will play in the roll out of the National Broadband Network?

6

What is your party's commitment to supporting Australians' access to quality online information through libraries? Will you support, for example, funding the purchase of quality digital content for all Australians through the National Library of Australia's Electronic Resources Australia project?

7

Does your party recognise the potential of libraries to deliver social, educational and economic benefits at a national level?

8

Is your party willing to be the first in Australian history at a national level to take advantage of the library system to make major social, educational and economic advances?

9

Is your party in agreement with the principle that there should be a teacher librarian in every school?

10

Does your party uphold the fundamental right of freedom of access to information?

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Template Letter No.1

You can download a Microsoft Word editable version of this letter at <http://www.alia.org.au/election2010/letter1.doc>

Dear [MP or candidate's name]

The Global Financial Crisis means that libraries around Australia have never been busier. Public libraries, school libraries, TAFE, academic libraries and special libraries are providing services to people who welcome free access to information, knowledge, ideas and stories, in traditional print formats and online.

In the 2010 federal election, at a national level, library and information professionals are lobbying for:

- A national digitisation strategy
- A federally-funded national early childhood literacy initiative
- Public libraries to be partners in the National Broadband Network
- A base level of provision of electronic resources for all Australians through ERA
- Funding for the National Year of Reading 2012
- A federal government improvement plan for the Australian public library system
- A rejection of internet filtering
- A qualified teacher librarian in every school
- A national cybersafety campaign for children, parents and the community
- Long-term free access to government information in print and on the web

I would appreciate the opportunity to meet and discuss any or all of these key issues and also to talk about our local priorities.

Please call [] or email [] with a date and time.

If you would like further information on the priorities listed above, go to www.alia.org.au.

Kind regards

Your Name



Template Letter No.2

You can download a Microsoft Word editable version of this letter at <http://www.alia.org.au/election2010/letter2.doc>

Dear [MP or candidate's name]

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- A federal government improvement plan for the Australian public library system
- A rejection of internet filtering
- A qualified teacher librarian in every school
- A national cybersafety campaign for children, parents and the community
- Long-term free access to government information in print and on the web

I/we feel particularly strongly about the issue of [.....]. Our local situation is that [.....].
I/we ask that you [.....].

I/we would appreciate your help in this matter and look forward to receiving your response.

If you would like further information about the other items listed above, go to www.alia.org.au.

Kind regards

NAME