

Responses from Brenda McConchie

Candidate for Board of Directors

What benefits do you believe ALIA membership can bring to a new graduate?

When I first graduated and joined ALIA I really had no expectations of what the association could do for me and therefore probably did not get as much out of my membership as I could have. Now I am much older and hopefully wiser I think that I would have benefited from a group like the New Graduates. It seems to be an excellent avenue for new entrants to the profession and offers a number of activities such as symposiums etc. that focus on issues of interest to new graduates. I think the essentials that ALIA could provide new graduates involve assistance with navigating the library maze – who is who, information about employment opportunities, specialisations in librarianship, tips and traps for new starters, information about groups to join, upcoming conferences - a personal welcome to the association and the profession.

What role do you see new graduates playing in the function and direction of ALIA?

It is probably a bit cliché to say that new graduates are the future of the profession and ALIA but it is true. I am keen for new graduates to take a leadership role and present ALIA with ideas and options for both its function and direction. If I am elected as an ALIA Director I would ensure that the views of new graduates would be fed into any strategic process, just like I would ensure that they would be for other groups and individuals. I know that there are channels for this to happen now but strengthening them and creating new ones would be a personal aim of mine. Apart from providing ideas to the Board, there is an opportunity to become the face of the profession for potential students of librarianship – develop ways of getting the library message across to school leavers making decisions about what they want to study at university – what a great profession, interesting and exciting jobs etc.

How do you propose to engage with new graduates if you are elected to the Board?

Since 1993 I have been heavily involved with the newer entrants into libraries through the Aurora Leadership Institute. This has been the focus of my commitment to the profession and also to ALIA. I have actively encouraged the Aurora participants and alumni to be involved in ALIA and I am very pleased that so many have made a significant contribution to the association and have been very involved with new graduates groups. I hope to continue my involvement with Aurora for a little while yet and if I become a director of ALIA, to bring about whatever synergies are possible to enhance both.

What would you do to ensure ALIA's relevance to new graduates?

ALIA is a professional association and requires an active partnership between members, including new graduates and the association's leadership. If I am elected I will encourage actions that balance the interests of particular groups with those of the broader membership. I would like to see new graduates actively involved in ALIA and ALIA actively involved with them. I would also work to have

a range of creative professional development options available for new graduates, papers at conferences and seminars addressing new graduate issues, regular features in inCite, perhaps exchanges or tours targeting new graduates and linking them with similar groups in other states and countries.

Would you commit to supporting the continuation of the New Librarians' Symposium?

Information I have received about the Symposiums that have been held to date has been very positive and I assume useful to those who attended and who were involved in running them. I hope the one planned for Melbourne later this year will be very successful. I also know of the recent leadership forums that were run very successfully in Adelaide and Melbourne and would like to be involved with any activities that provide an opportunity for discussion about ideas and issues and promote learning and development.

In summary, I believe that being a member of a profession such as librarianship carries with it the responsibility to be actively engaged in the growth and development of the professional association and the individuals who are its constituents. This can be as a new graduate or an older one like myself. If I am elected as a director of ALIA, I encourage and challenge you all to make sure I am acting in your interests and in the interests of the association.