



Australian
Library and
Information
Association

ALIA NAC Regional Reports 2009

NSW State Library, Coles room,
Sydney
6:00 pm, 28 September 2009

1. Attendance:

Twelve members were in attendance. Apologies were received from four members. The meeting was facilitated by Jan Richards, ALIA President. Niki Kallenberger, NSW LLO, took notes and prepared this report.

Thank you to the State Library of New South Wales for providing a meeting room.

2. Selected representative to attend the national meeting of the NAC

Name: Alyson Dalby

ALIA membership no. 048016

3. Review of the outcomes from the 2008 NAC topic '*Staying smart in a complicated world - professional development*'

Jan reported on outcomes of the 2008 NAC. These were well received by the group.

4. Discussion topic: *Lobbying and Advocacy: working together to make a difference*

Our discussions on Lobbying and Advocacy were wide-ranging and reflected the diversity of those present. The following points encapsulate the key concerns that emerged:

- We need to break down stereotypes of librarians and libraries. Employers often reinforce stereotypes by employing unqualified people. This is an especially serious issue in school libraries.
- It would be great if the ALIA/ASLA partnership could use statistics that are now available to produce publications demonstrating how school libraries enhance learning. ALIA/ASLA should work towards establishing national standards for school library staffing.
- Public libraries often get heard in the media, other libraries don't. We need to learn from what works in the public library sector and replicate it elsewhere. We can also benefit from learning from overseas experiences. We need to find ways to show the value of libraries and the work we do.

- We need to work more with the information / knowledge management sector.
- The university library sector needs to lobby university chancelleries as decision makers and budget managers, not the library industry. ALIA members need to know this.
- How can we connect lobbying and advocacy with professional development? Is there a course about learning to advocate? Are there PD points for specific lobbying and advocacy activities? We advocate all the time, but maybe we don't recognise this. *PD Postings* (which is great!) could be used to remind people about lobbying and advocacy activities as a way to gain PD points.
- Members need to know more about what Board members, National Office staff, etc are doing – "internal advocacy". Regular updates in executive summary style via *inCite* or email would be great.
- We don't always practice what we preach! Communication within the Association could be better. *PD Postings* is excellent. We need things in multiple formats, and that can be re-purposed (no PDFs, please!). We need to find things when we want them – sometimes there's just too much on the ALIA website.
- There are 56 library associations in Australia! That's too many! We need to speak with one voice and consolidate what we do.
- What issues should ALIA be lobbying government about?
 - Increased funding for libraries, especially school and TAFE libraries
 - Access to broadband throughout nation
 - Ensuring freedom of information, and that books are not banned
 - Overcoming the rural/urban divide
 - Standardising pay scales across different sectors.
- How is ALIA connecting to the federal government's Education Revolution?
- Has ALIA been overprotective of content with the result that members can't advocate as effectively as they might? The "Every Member is an Advocate" campaign concept was well-received.
- How can ALIA reconnect with longtime members who may feel intimidated by the Association? It's nice to connect with people!
- Lots of lobbying and advocacy is happening. We need very brief synopses of these activities that indicate clearly what this might mean, and it can be applied to specific workplace situations.
- We need to advocate for professional positions in all organisations, and we need standards for positions at all levels.
- We need to speak to the media with one voice. A high profile personality to speak on behalf of all libraries would be wonderful. ALIA is to be congratulated for using the services of a media specialist.
- We need a mechanism that enables members to make suggestions for lobbying and advocacy activities.

- A "Little Book of Librarians" (along the lines of the Little Book of Public Libraries") would be wonderful. The New Generation Advisory Committee may be interested in working on this.

5. Local issues

No local issues were raised.

6. Any other comments from the meeting?

Comprehensive information about school libraries and the issues impacting on them can be found at The Hub <http://hubinfo.wordpress.com/>

7. Evaluation

The meeting was very well received, with those present rating the opportunity to participate in discussions, the program and content and organisational aspects 4 or 5 (5 = excellent).

Responses acknowledged the value and benefit of

- Meeting other members
- Having senior members of the Board and staff of the Association present to hear their concerns
- Finding out about ALIA's lobbying and advocacy activities
- Exchanging ideas and suggestions
- Focusing on one topic.

Suggestions for improvement included:

- Getting more people to attend (though it was acknowledged this was difficult)
- Providing free booze
- Holding the meeting in Parramatta
- Teleconferencing with other locations in NSW.

Other comments included:

- NAC meetings are a great idea, keep them going.
- Two meetings a year would be good.
- How will those present get feedback?