



Australian
Library and
Information
Association

ALIA NAC Regional Reports 2009

- 1. Attendance:** 17 plus Chair and note taker
- 2. Selected representative to attend the national meeting of the NAC (they must be a member)**

Name: Alisa Sputore _____

ALIA membership no. 047990 _____

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

Derek Whitehead provided an overview of the topics covered in the 2008 NAC including the discussion on compulsory PD. The meeting had no questions about the outcomes of the 2008 NAC.

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

Derek Whitehead provided a summary of the kinds of activities which fall under the umbrella of advocacy and lobbying within ALIA and the feedback gathered from members as part of the membership survey with regard to lobbying and advocacy. He reported that members rated the need to lobbying and advocacy as high, but ALIA's effectiveness in this area as low.

The meeting discussed the concept that ALIA's lobbying and advocacy efforts to all three tiers of government often remain invisible to both the membership and the Australian community at large. It was suggested that ALIA submissions need to be developed into public position statements and position papers so that they can be further published and therefore have a higher profile with the media, researchers and ALIA members. This would increase the value of the submissions and increase their visibility. ALIA submissions to government bodies and policy makers need to be developed to become public documents.

The meeting expressed the need for greater transparency to members on how ALIA lobbying policies were developed and how ALIA arrived at the position statement put to decision makers. For example: The meeting questioned how ALIA arrived at the stand it has taken on the issue of parallel importing of books and who had input into the policy making. If members could see how these decisions were made, and felt they had the opportunity to contribute to them, they would enjoy a greater understanding of the process and feeling of participation. At present the process ALIA takes of arriving at a position on public issues remains a mystery to most members.

Members need greater reporting back on lobbying and advocacy projects, ALIA's goal in this area, successes and anticipated outcomes. Members feel

disengaged for the final outcomes of campaigns as they are not informed throughout the process.

It was felt ALIA would have a greater success with lobbying and advocacy issues if we could present the LIS industry to all levels of government as a large cross sectoral industry with the ability to assist with service delivery of government initiatives rather than another industry seeking financial support.

It was acknowledged the LIS industry has difficulty lobbying governments as there is no one single Minister or Department responsible for libraries and information.

It was agreed we need to state and restate our stance on issue both within the membership and to outside observers. It was suggested ALIA sponsor public debates on topics such as copyright, as a policy debate would inform members and the public.

On which topics should ALIA lobby?

- Representatives of the ALIA New Graduates Group voiced the need for ALIA to lobby to industry employers for improved career opportunities for new graduates in the industry.
- Urge employers to take on only LIS qualified staff.
- Government support for libraries at all three levels.
- Copyright.
- Adequate and equitable access to broadband.
- Literacy.
- Social inclusion.
- Censorship, filtering and online content regulation.
- Industrial relations issues for LIS workers.

How can ALIA achieve its lobbying and advocacy goals?

- The meeting discussed the concept that using the term 'lobbying and advocacy' was misrepresentative and that they were in fact two separate concepts which needed to be considered on their own merits.
- The group defined lobbying as being strategic requests to government bodies and policy makers to undertake a particular course of action – a call to action. Lobbying needs to be a task driven role, focussing on individual projects.
- Advocacy was described as the process by which all members can seek to improve the image of the industry and to promote the industry and it's ideals as a whole.
- As a general guide, ALIA the organisation is best placed to lobby, whereas the members as a whole, or as individuals, are best placed to perform an advocacy role.

- It was noted ALIA should be looking at the larger, strategic issues, as opposed to being concerned with the personal image of librarians in the popular media, and move to providing valuable information and insight on information issues at a higher level. These issues need to move beyond the call for higher funding for libraries and include areas such as; copyright, information literacy and the role of libraries in social inclusion.
- ALIA should lobby on political issues, as this will give us a public voice and improve our credibility.
- ALIA should seek to commission research into the areas in which we wish to have influence, either by conducting it ourselves, offering grants to members, or aligning ourselves with other organisations who can undertake research roles for us. This research needs to be used to strengthen our debate. We should seek to use other published research, such as the OECD reports, to add weight to our arguments.
- ALIA should encourage and facilitate members in providing material for local newspapers. Campaigns should be local as well as national.
- ALIA should provide a range of forms and templates for members and the public to utilise when contacting local politician and decision makers.
- ALIA should investigate non traditional media as an outlet, including publications like 'The big issue'.

5. Local issues

Sue Mckerracher provided an update on her role as the ALIA Disaster Recovery Project Manager and the rebuilding with books project.

6. Any other comments from the meeting?

David Feighan raised the issue of ALIA's financial viability and expressed concern for the organisation's continuing financial losses over a number of years. The meeting discussed the nature of ALIA's finances and the negative impact of the GCF, declining membership numbers and loss of income from conferences. The meeting conferred that ALIA's finances were vulnerable from a number of aspects, and as such, pressed the need for financial prudence and transparency at all levels and across all activities.

7. Evaluation

Forwarded to ALIA National Office

Margie Anderson
19 October 2009