



Australian  
Library and  
Information  
Association

# ALIA NAC Regional Reports 2009

Gawler TAFE  
Gawler, South Australia  
5:00 pm, 17<sup>th</sup> September 2009

## 1. Attendance:

Three members were in attendance. The meeting was facilitated by Philip Keane, ALIA Director. Kate Sinclair, ALIA Director, took notes and prepared this report.

Thank you to the Gawler TAFE for providing a meeting room.

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

Name:

ALIA membership no.

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

Philip reported on outcomes of the 2008 NAC.

Additional comments from the group:

- PD Postings newsletter is the best item to come out of it. Not hidden in other email but one single succinct posting. Very useful.
- *Should PD be compulsory?*
  - PD scheme should be available to institutional members
  - Leaning towards non-compulsory. Public libraries leading the field looking for other skill sets. Aim for customer service skills first and then look at other things. If you can't get on with people, there are no jobs we can give you any more...
  - Qualifications are still high priority but it's not the only decider any more. Not all graduates are work-ready. Depends on the teacher who is teaching the subject, needs to extend the student's knowledge and encourage initiative. Practitioners need to be doing the teaching. Applications that show they are involved with ALIA and doing PD, would be an extra tick in the box, need to market to students about the way it will help them get a job.
- Positive feedback on Incite's monthly 'theme' of focusing on a different sector

## 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:

*What is lobbying and advocacy? How is it different to marketing?*

*Why is lobbying and advocacy important to our profession and how can we do it better?*

- Events and campaigns are not lobbying and advocacy but marketing/promotion
  - Lobbying = influencing powerbrokers to put libraries in a more advantageous situation
  - Ensuring that libraries have a voice in the conversations that affect them
  - ALIA lobbying is a voice to state and federal govt arguing for the role of librarians & libraries
  - ALIA has one voice that reflects the diversity of libraries and Australian society
- The existing events and campaigns have value – it's nice to have a lead from ALIA on that with templates and a high media profile. You can choose to engage at whatever your library can do at that point. You can choose to engage or not. Download-ables from the ALIA website is a good way to support local activities. Don't spend lots and lots of money on mailing out stuff that people might not use. NSS is good to raise the profile.
- SA libraries website works well but how to share activities with other libraries – maybe get libraries to RSS when their websites are updated with news – then it all appears on the SA libraries site.
- Possibly use Facebook, Twitter, Myspace to get out our message

*What issues should we be lobbying government about?*

- Not sure – it's a reactive role. Misuse and use of information. Public libraries are now into community redevelopment. Keep continuing to raise the profile of the profession and changing the stereotype.
- Communicating back to members and the industry about the lobbying that ALIA is doing is important.
- How about a page in Incite saying "presently consulting on these issues" – not too much text, dot points and just some basic information. And perhaps not just "ALIA" national advocacy but "ALIA members" and what they are advocating about at their local level. (similar to the update on the Industrial Relations page)
- And/or "Lobbying email" similar to 'PD postings'
- Re communication : There is lot of duplication of content on e-lists. Do we need a single list? Or should people take responsibility to delete things?

*What tools and resources do you need for advocacy?*

- Industrial relations support – column in Incite is useful. How could ALIA do this effectively across all the awards of each states?
- When looking at creating tools for members for local advocacy – don't assume that people don't already do it well. Some people can be offended/insulted to have material created for them when they already do a great job - the local librarian is sometimes the most fantastic marketer.
- Devote a column or issue of Incite to members across Australia who are doing this stuff well – promote the best practice – peer to peer learning
- The National Standards on ALIA website are really useful in times of trouble/stress/need guidance. Great to be able to find the data easily to cut and paste into a report or proposal.

- The provision of quality standards is important (qualifications, censorship, privacy, etc)
- Making ALIA website a single place for best practice resources by offering a space to share similar work / data collection / research / best practice. eg business cases and funding proposals
- Gives people a feeling that you are not an isolated professional within your organization, you are referring back to standards set for the profession by professional organization
- Kudos to the Public Library Summit and the Little Book of Public Libraries!! – this is a great initiative!
- Bringing NAC out to regional areas is great
- Educating our sectors about the cultural importance that libraries have in community development
- Need for more PD in Management & business training (not mentoring) and assistance with managerial skill sets (eg how to write funding proposals) . This could be delivered via online PD that you could dip in and out of as required. Sometimes you need to learn it from non-library people (learn accountants or IT language so you can speak in their language).
- How to create useful and meaningful KPIs instead of 'fluffy stuff', that resonate with our stakeholders

*How can we be more engaged with lobbying and advocacy?*

- Good to see ALIA doing things but also good to have lead from ALIA on when we can assist. Eg "please step up now to raise this issue in your local area" and here's the ways we can support you.
- Is there a role for the LLO here? She is the resource person for the committees and drawing info together and bringing this back to the national office. However, you don't see that much of the LLO if you are not involved in the groups or committees. Could she assist institutional members in promoting the role and the resources of ALIA within their organisations?
- Would a more visible staff presence on the ground help? ALIA staff could assist with facilitating the local networking and practical stuff.
- It's a decision to be a member of a committee. What's in it for me professionally? Assistance with events would be a more attractive option - you watch people get involved and then get burnt out – it doesn't seem attractive. Limited time frame, not endlessly ongoing?
- Assistance with promoting the benefits of a library service within your council (especially if they are not familiar with the process)
- The Cybersafety and copyright advocacy campaign has been good

## **5. Local issues**

- Working in a regional/rural setting I don't need to use web 2.0 technologies that often – there would be value in offering these to rural members as a PD option to keep skills up to date.
- Great to see ALIA offering a scholarship for students to attend conferences, attending the exhibition and program and accessing the trade fair
- Access to the journals is great for students, especially for external students. Good for networking and those with a special area of interest.

- It would be great to see more students involved. Perhaps create a "liaison" student role to encourage other students to join and be involved – an advocate within the student body.
- Community services and library services have already increased in this area (Gawler) and will continue to grow as the population expands – ALIA could assist with lobbying in this area
- Attracting younger members? Younger and diverse members of the profession. Quite hard in regional areas. Need for diversity and the ability to understand different cultures.
- Teleconferencing the regional and remote NAC was great.
- Should try YView (audio and video teleconferencing) for future sessions?

## **6. Any other comments from the meeting?**

How can we get more people along to these discussions? Participants agreed to send email around to colleagues the next day explaining how good it was.

## **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

- Knowledge, skills and information sharing
- Networking, meeting ALIA directors, not having to travel far

Suggestions for improvement included:

- Attracting more participants
- Better marketing to increase participation

Other comments included:

- Very supportive of having the NAC in a regional location
- Everything had been covered and raised