



Roxanne Missingham

ALIA President

Feedback to your Board of Directors

Do you have a compliment, an idea, or a concern about your Association? Contact any Director and your ideas will be reviewed at the next Board meeting.

E-mail to feedback@alia.org.au will be automatically forwarded to all Board members.

Roxanne Missingham, President
ph 02 6277 7102
roxanne.missingham@alia.org.au

Derek Whitehead,
Vice-president
ph 03 9214 8333
derek.whitehead@alia.org.au

Michelle Brennand, Director
ph 08 9405 5490
michelle.brennand@alia.org.au

Philip Keane, Director
ph 08 8222 3224
philip.keane@alia.org.au

Damian Lodge, Director
ph 02 6933 2172
damian.lodge@alia.org.au

Helen Partridge, Director
ph 07 3864 9047
helen.partridge@alia.org.au

Kate Watson, Director
ph 07 5459 4417
kate.watson@alia.org.au

It is a great privilege to write my first column as ALIA President. I'd like to start by thanking Dagmar Schmidmaier for her outstanding contribution as ALIA President over the past year. It was a very significant year for the Association – among other projects, we put our financial management on a sounder footing with a new investment strategy which will provide a much more sustainable model for the future. Education and workforce planning also emerged as strong themes; at the Peak Bodies meeting held in May ALIA announced a planning program beginning with the production of a draft discussion paper for the whole profession and leading to a Forum on Education in 2008. Dagmar led these initiatives, which are critical for ALIA and for the profession.

We farewell two Board members with the commencement of the 2008 ALIA Board – Rachael Browning and Ann Ritchie. Both Rachael and Ann brought a terrific range of experiences and perspectives to the Board. Their interests in library service development, management and CPD enabled them to make a remarkable contribution to all the work of the Board. Many thanks, Rachael and Ann, for your contribution over the past two years.

ALIA is a very important organisation. We have a varied and strong membership – currently there are 4 569 individual members and 907 institutional members. ALIA has local liaison officers in all states and territories, as well as the National Office, providing services and products to you. Importantly, ALIA's benefits to members come from members. You organise a fabulous array of events, locally and nationally; work on important issues, such as copyright; and contribute to knowledge development through our professional publications and events. It is you members who are at the heart of all ALIA's successes and I'd like to congratulate everyone who is helping their professional colleagues – in particular those working on the National Library and Information Technicians Conference which will be held in Melbourne, 9–12 October (<http://www.alia07.com/>) and the Public Libraries Conference, 5–7 August, in Adelaide (<http://www.pla.org.au/Conferences.htm>).

Our goals for 2007/08 include building a stronger organisation which can deliver services, particularly advocacy, to benefit Australian library users and Australian libraries. Our plan, developed in consultation through the National Advisory Congress meetings last year focuses on:

- Promoting the free flow of information and ideas through open access to recorded knowledge, information, and creative works
- Connection of people to ideas
- Commitment to literacy, information literacy and learning
- Respect for the diversity and individuality of all people
- Preservation of the human record

- Excellence in professional service to our communities
- Partnerships to advance these values.

Specifically we plan to develop our advocacy program, recognising that it is a federal election year and that issues of online content regulation and filtering, copyright, and funding for library services remain critical to our sector and our users. Membership growth, achieving a new direction on education for the profession and continuing to build our partnerships with other organisations such as Public Libraries Australia, Australian School Library Association, Australian Society of Archivists and Records Management Association of Australasia are important means that we will use to achieve our goals. We have also begun a review of committees and representatives – and would be delighted to review your comments.

In the past month I have attended a number of meetings – the most significant by far was the National Licensing Forum held at the NLA. You may recall that in October 2003 the Senate Environment, Communications, Information Technology and the Arts References Committee report on their Inquiry into the Role of Libraries in the Online Environment recommended that funding be provided for a set of key databases for all Australians. While the report did not result in funding for such an approach the issue of a national co-operative purchasing scheme has been the subject of very considerable discussion and work over the past four years.

After extensive discussion with all library sectors on models, funding, processes, governance and purpose, a tender was conducted to identify products for purchase by Australian libraries on an opt-in model. Six products were selected and announced at the Forum. Julie Rae's article in this issue of inCite contains information on the selected products and operation of the consortia, Electronic Resources Australia (ERA) (<http://era.nla.gov.au/>). Jan Fullerton called the agreement a major breakthrough in the national delivery of library services to all, a critical step for an informed nation. And she was right!

For all libraries to work together to develop a suite of products is a huge step forward. The next challenge is to encourage libraries to express interest in the products to enable pricing for 2007/08 subscriptions to be obtained. Congratulations to all involved, particularly Julie Rae, chair of the Reference Group and Erica Ryan, the support officer in the National Library.

To finish off: I look forward to meeting many of you this year – a year in which we celebrate our 70th anniversary as an organisation, and the contribution made by libraries to the Australian community. Please don't hesitate to contact me with your thoughts about ALIA.

After the elections

(An open letter to the candidates)

As a member of ALIA, I would like to convey my thanks to all the candidates for taking the time to nominate and run for the ALIA Board. It was a case whereby the Association would have 'won' with whoever was elected.

I'd suggest that the support of the ALIA New Graduates was – perhaps – a key factor in the outcome? While my 'controversial' call of the card proved prophetic (if I could only pick the Lotto numbers so well!), it was certainly no reflection on any of the candidates or their nominations...and, as a personal member of ALIA, I thank all the candidates for putting themselves forward and applaud their efforts in wanting to serve the Association.

Thank you for standing...and, as someone who stood three times before he got elected to (then) General Council (possibly because the voters thought 'Oh, if we don't, he'll NEVER go away!'), I hope this won't be the last endeavour of the unsuccessful candidates.

Trevor Wakely, Melbourne

An apple for the teacher? Oh no!

The apple, pencil and musty tones on the cover of *inCite's* April 2007 issue raised a wry laugh at our place. These images could be said to be as representative of contemporary school libraries as a twinset, a date-stamp and a box of index cards are of wider LIS environments. To balance any misconception – and the disappointingly

limited coverage of school libraries in an issue intended to 'look at issues for teacher-librarians' (page 3) – we would draw attention to the vibrancy of many school libraries as learning-engaging knowledge hubs.

A quick scan of journals such as *Access* (published by ASLA), *Scan* (Library Services, NSW Department of Education), *Synergy* (School Library Association of Victoria), or the OZTL-NET online discussion list (managed by the School of Information Studies at CSU), reveals the dynamism and diversity of teacher-librarians' roles as educators and information professionals. As leaders and collaborative partners in their school communities many teacher-librarians contribute variously to curriculum development and teaching; the management of high-use, learner-focused information centres; integrated information literacy across disciplines and year levels; the promotion of children's literature and reading; the creation and use of innovative resources and ICTs for learning; support for and engagement in research, evidence-based practice and professional development; the school community's outreach; events organisation.

Readers are encouraged to explore the dynamic world of school libraries represented by these publications, through professional interaction and collaborative partnerships with teacher-librarians.

Hilary Hughes and Raylee Elliott Burns, Brisbane

Using e-lists better

David Pruss, in the May *inCite*, provided information on the cost to ALIA of running e-lists and he asked whether non-members should be permitted to use a service paid for and maintained by membership subscriptions. To the factors he identified as pertinent to the discussion, I would add some more.

The e-lists could be viewed by ALIA as a marketing tool, which is used to persuade a small proportion of non-members to join the association. The number of duplicate posts is high (I subscribe to five ALIA e-lists and most posts appear on each list). Discussion is minimal (most posts promote events or distribute news). The quality of discussions, when they occur, is generally not high (in comparison with discussions on the e-lists of some other professional groups), and, although occasionally useful, are rarely productive. The differences between the public, education and corporate sectors of ALIA are not as great as is sometimes claimed; each sector learns from the others. Blogs, wikis and RSS feeds are, at the moment, complementary tools rather than alternatives to e-lists.

The ALIA e-lists should continue to be open to all. Management of the e-lists could be improved, however, without impairing the work of groups, by reducing the number to two – one for news and events and one for discussion.

Paul Bentley AALIA, Bondi Junction



07 Libraries Australia Forum

**State Library of Queensland
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RSVP by 27 August 2007

