



# President's Letter

14 January 2019

Hello everyone

I hope you have had a refreshing break over the Christmas and New Year period and that you are looking forward to an invigorating and exciting 2019. There's certainly plenty happening in the ALIA world to engage with and by which you can be motivated both personally and for the libraries and communities with which you are involved.

ALIA has been welcomed as a civil society partner in the UNESCO International Year of Indigenous Languages (IYIL) and we are proud to promote the campaign as part of our 2018-2019 focus on Indigenous matters.

Later this month, we will be publishing a report on the many ways in which Australian libraries are working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to improve services and collections. One of the key messages from the report is that it is essential to engage with local communities rather than work in isolation. For IYIL in 2019, we encourage any library that hasn't already done so, to reach out to its community and find ways to acknowledge and celebrate Indigenous languages. It could be something as simple as including a welcome in first language at the entrance to your library or creating a special IYIL event. This is a very significant year for which many libraries and communities have already been planning exciting initiatives both large and small. I'd love to hear about some of them any time you'd like to share your news.

The same message of engagement and collaboration resonated through our ALIA Leadership & Innovation Forums, which took place around Australia in the second half of 2018. There were seven events, involving 32 different organisations and more than 300 participants. Following the Indigenous matters theme, issues raised included the lack of diversity in the library workforce, the need for more professionals from an Indigenous background, and the opportunity to develop new forms of resource description to provide valid and respectful ways of cataloguing collections of Indigenous materials.

You will also have seen the call for expressions of interest for two ALIA scholarships for Indigenous people to study library and information science and I have been pleased to sponsor a grant for an Indigenous person to attend ALIA Information Online in Sydney next month. If you haven't already registered for Information Online, you have until 28 January, and I hope you will be able to join us for a fantastic program of speakers, with the wonderful Terri Janke speaking about revitalising First Nations' languages. I'm also looking forward to meeting some of my favourite authors at the conference, including award-winning crime writer Michael Robotham. ALIA Information Online is always an inspiring and motivating event and I look forward to meeting many of you in Sydney.



Best wishes

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