We are all different, yet we are all the same.

Mary-Claire King
Sweet!

Everyone had a chance to sample the sweet taste of success when the 2011 MasterChef Winner Kate Bracks launched her new cookbook, The Sweet Life, at Orange City Library, NSW in March. The crowd of 550 included family, friends and the fans from the Orange community all ready and willing to officially launch her book and share in champagne and dessert treats from Kate’s own recipes. Kate is pictured here with her mother Barbara Pickett and sister Sally Stark.

Central West Libraries Manager, Jan Richards, said the event was a wonderful way for Kate to launch her book and begin her national tour from the renowned gourmet region of Orange, which is home to both Kate and the famous Food Of Orange District (F.O.O.D) Week.
Thank you and good night

By the time this issue of INCITE reaches you I will be in Canberra, heading for the Annual General Meeting and handing over to incoming President Vanessa Little and the new Board of Directors. So it’s timely for me to be reflecting on the last two years as a Director and President, it has been an interesting, challenging, frustrating and rewarding experience.

I have had the opportunity to meet many members and the privilege to get to know the National Office staff and work with them. I’ve been challenged by the expectations of members (and non-members) and I’ve come to understand the issues facing specific sectors of our profession in much more depth.

One of the things that I knew before, but hadn’t fully understood, is the extent of volunteering that goes on in, and for, ALIA. It is really amazing and it is absolutely true that ALIA could not achieve half of what it does without our many members giving so freely of their time, skills, energy and enthusiasm – thank you.

The National Office staff are great supporters of members and our profession. It’s true that not all the Canberra staff are library professionals, but they are all great supporters of what we do and work hard on our behalf to further the objectives of the Association. And the State Managers, all of whom are experienced and talented library professionals, provide that important local link into the Association and the National office.

The challenges facing the Board have been many and varied, resulting in some difficult and sobering discussions around the Board table. While our financial position has improved significantly over the last two years, this still remains one of the biggest challenges to the Board, National Office staff and ALIA members.

Naturally there is some frustration regarding goals as yet not reached, and top of mind for me is the recruitment process for the Executive Director, which is still underway but I hope will be resolved shortly. This has, in turn, delayed somewhat our progress around a number of important strategic initiatives expressed in ALIA’s Strategic Plan 2011-2015.

However, I do think the greatest challenge we face is that of the future of our profession. I have discussed this previously in this column and also my own optimism about the future of libraries and librarianship as a profession, but this remains a big challenge, and one in which we must all engage.

I was disappointed in the lack of engagement by members in our 2011 National Advisory Congress discussions on this topic but I am encouraged by the discussion among the newer members of our profession who come to us with enthusiasm and new ideas about what it is to be a library or information professional. Our future is in our hands and relies on each of us advocating for libraries and librarians in our own sphere of influence – this is not just ALIA’s role, it is every member’s role.

The National Year of Reading is certainly one of the highlights of my term. While it is proving to be an astoundingly successful initiative in engaging people in reading, establishing fruitful collaborations, and promoting libraries, it is the recognition by the Federal Government of the trust, value, diversity and broad reach of Australia’s library community that is most rewarding and heartening for our future.

Finally, I’d like to acknowledge and thank some specific individuals who have supported and enabled me to take on this role. My sincere thanks to the leadership team at the State Library of Western Australia, who have had to take on additional responsibilities to provide me with the capacity to undertake this role. I’d also like to acknowledge Sue Hutley (former Executive Director) and Rob Miller (Acting Executive Director) for their advice, support and leadership. And, most importantly, my family who have put up with the interruptions caused by the long haul between Perth and Canberra on so many occasions with good grace and humour.

Margaret Allen
ALIA President
margaret.allen@alia.org.au

Staying shipshape

In our March issue Elizabeth Swan mentioned great memories from the high seas on the Information Online Conference cocktail cruise in 1988. She’d like to tweak that memory – the correct name of the ship encountered and serenaded with a rousing round of Waltzing Matilda was the STS Young Endeavour rather than the new HMS Endeavour. The STS Young Endeavour is a sail training ship operated by the Royal Australian Navy. Apologies for any confusion this may have caused.
What the non-librarian sees

‘Deoxyribonucleic acid’ is extremely difficult to both spell and pronounce so it is no wonder we usually simplify it to DNA.

Wikipedia says that DNA is “one of the three major macromolecules that are essential for all known forms of life”, and another description says that it is the hereditary material in humans and almost all other organisms.

So is there an identifiable trail that clearly shows the hereditary characteristics of library and information professionals?

I am not a library and information professional but have been a library client for many years so perhaps I am better placed to offer an opinion than one who may be accused of personal bias.

Like many of us, my first experience with library staff was at a public library. I can’t recall any of the librarians I met those many years ago, but I do remember a couple of things. Everybody in the library had to be deathly quiet, the demarcation zone between the kids’ space and the adults’ area was clear and A Tale of Two Cities was not an appropriate book for somebody of my age – although I am not sure whether that was because of the violence in the book or its author’s capacity to set heads nodding off in some of the more rambling sections.

But the librarian could always help me find the books I was after when I couldn’t follow that really complex Huey, Dewey and Louie filing system they used or reach the top shelf.

There was a library at the high school I attended and the librarian doubled up as the music teacher. She was glamorous, with what I thought was a glamorous job, partly because she seemed to have access to really innovative technology such as recordings of Shakespeare’s plays. Most importantly, she introduced me to books of criticism of the texts I was reading, so I had somewhere to go to get help in understanding what those books and plays were all about.

I met my favourite librarian in a film. Bunny Gibson was Kate Hepburn at her best and exhibited the true DNA of a librarian if you ask me. The Librarians was not satire, it was buffoonery. In Desk Set, Bunny and her team were at risk of being made redundant by a computer and a time and motions man (Spencer Tracy of course). Bunny and her team were brilliant at their jobs; customer service was their focus, they all multi-tasked, they worked and played as a team, they gained pleasure in their achievements and they sought the right answer, not just any answer.

As a library client, these are the hereditary characteristics I identify in all the library and information professionals who have helped me over the years.

As humans, though, we have to evolve and compete. Information professionals must now also be able to advocate, because they are competing for scarce funds. They need to have their own continual learning gene because change occurs at such a rapid pace. I think they also need a Star Trek gene that takes them to places no person has been before. By this I mean that in all types of library or information service, the clients are busy adapting technologies, new forms of networks, different standards of social behaviour and etiquette that, if not embraced by the profession, must be at least understood. It’s a question of how brave we are.

Rob Miller
ALIA Acting Executive Director
rob.miller@alia.org.au

New State Manager for WA

Welcome to Noreen Kirkman, ALIA’s new WA State Manager. A long time member of ALIA, Noreen has a wealth of experience in outreach librarianship and will be a wonderful asset to ALIA and our Western Australian members.

Hash it up for LIW and NSS

Get those socially media-savvy fingers tapping for Library and Information Week and National Simultaneous Storytime 2012 with these hashtags: #liw2012 for Library and Information Week and #nss12 for National Simultaneous Storytime (we like the symmetry of this one as 2012 is also the 12th year of running NSS!).
ALIA NEWS

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ALIA Annual General Meeting 2012

6pm, Tuesday 15th May 2012
The Ferguson Room
National Library of Australia
Parkes Place, Parkes ACT

Come along, have your say and meet your Board of Directors. Members are also invited to join the Directors for refreshments after the meeting and to view the National Library’s The Life of Patrick White exhibition

Agenda
1. Notice of convening meeting
2. Apologies
3. Minutes of the 2011 AGM, 17 May 2011
4. Presentation of the Annual Report 2011 and financial statements
5. Election of Directors
6. Appointment of Auditors
7. Fixing of Auditors’ fees
8. Reports
9. President’s Report
10. Executive Director’s Report
11. Motions Received*
12. General business
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A BEAR, A BLOKE AND A REALLY GOOD BOOK

It’s nearly time to get cranky on a national scale. National Simultaneous Storytime (NSS) is only days away and ALIA is hoping to see this twelfth year for the event break all previous records, aiming for children in around 2000 locations across the nation to be settling down to read The Very Cranky Bear by Nick Bland at 11am on Wednesday May 23. INCITE spoke with Nick and Sarah Hatton from Scholastic Press ahead of the big day.

Nick isn’t one of those authors who seeks publicity but in 2012, publicity is certainly seeking him. Along with the selection of his popular bear for NSS, his book The Runaway Hug has just been shortlisted for the Children’s Book Council of Australia Awards (CBCA). He adds these achievements to his CBCA Notable Picture Book of the Year Award for A Monster Wrote Me a Letter, a Kids Own Australian Literature Award (KOALA) for the Honour Picture Book category for The Wrong Book, which was also shortlisted for the Picture Book category in those awards in 2010 – and also shortlisted for the same category in 2011 for the REAL Awards. As his publishers, Scholastic Press say, “Nick Bland is just getting bigger and better all the time.”

Nick has lived in Darwin since 2004, having grown up in country Victoria and spending his childhood and teens roaming in the bush. By the time he reached high school, he knew he loved to tell stories but it was only after stints in advertising and a bookshop that his love of the art of picture book writing inspired him to get back to the blank page himself. Then, just as it happens in every aspiring writer’s dreams, his manuscript for A Monster Wrote Me a Letter made it off the unsolicited pile at Scholastic to become his first success in 2005. Fourteen more picture books have followed; proof of just what a happy collaboration between a writer and his publisher can achieve.

This is Scholastic’s second foray into NSS, having been involved in 2007 when the selected book was Mem Fox’s The Magic Hat. Scholastic’s Sarah Hatton says the company is delighted to be back again in 2012. “National Simultaneous Storytime was a great project for us to be part of – it was really positive for us,” Sarah says. This year she says The Very Cranky Bear is the perfect book for National Simultaneous Storytime.

“THE BONDS READING Builds BETWEEN PARENTS AND CHILDREN, TEACHERS AND CHILDREN, AND CHILDREN AND THEIR PEERS ARE A MASSIVE PART OF SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT.”

THE BONDS READING Builds BETWEEN PARENTS AND CHILDREN, TEACHERS AND CHILDREN, AND CHILDREN AND THEIR PEERS ARE A MASSIVE PART OF SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT.
“It’s a beautiful read-aloud story.”

On the day itself, Nick will be at Taminmin Library participating in a dramatisation of the story of his bear but NSS has also meant an opportunity to get together with some old friends beforehand. Until the end of last year, Nick was also working as a ‘house parent’ for 100 indigenous teenagers from about 40 different top end and desert communities boarding in Darwin. Some of these kids were from the Tiwi Islands and Nick headed out there ahead of NSS to put together a podcast for the big day with the help of students at Pirlamigipi (also known as Garden Point) on Melville Island.

“I know just about all the kids there, and their families,” Nick says.

His relationship with these families – and his personal experience with helping to raise over 500 boys in his house parent role – mean indigenous disadvantage and literacy are two issues very close to his heart. He sees reading as a critical component in improving the situation.

“Reading,” Nick says, “is quite simply essential to development”. And not just reading, but also “engaging in story”. The bonds it builds between parents and children, teachers and children, and children and their peers are a massive part of social adjustment,” he says.

“The sharing of stories is intrinsic in all cultures. We are the lucky, rich, white society, who can take a book for granted. A group of Chinese asylum seekers arrived in Darwin last month and were camped at the ferry terminal that I use when I go to Darwin. At first I went to tell them how brave they were and to assure them that freedom would be theirs, and gave them some Australian currency. But the next day I went back with a version of The Very Cranky Bear that contained two versions of the story, one in Chinese and one in English so that they might use it to learn English while they were in detention.

“The money was probably useless to them however much the gesture meant, but when I gave them the book, I had successfully communicated to them on a universal level. The old man was beside himself. I hope they keep the book.”
Library DNA revealed

What are the basic building blocks of libraries? In the technology torrent that defines the ‘Digital New Age’, where the internet presents as marketplace rather than reliable information source, Ian McCallum says libraries are as they’ve always been: safe places for people, stories and ideas. Libraries are Durable, Necessary and Adaptable – that’s the real DNA of libraries.

While we may not all share the same understanding of the term ‘library’ – according to the Oxford English Dictionary first used in English by Chaucer c1374 – today’s library is much more than the OED’s definition of “A place set apart to contain books for reading, study, or reference”. The book has spawned the audio book and the large print book and lately the ebook, and the journal has morphed into the database. Libraries continue to carefully select printed materials and create and select digital items, delivering them through an increasing number of in-person and electronic channels.

2012 is the National Year of Reading. We need it, badly. In 2006 just over half of Australians aged 15-74 years had adequate or better prose and document literacy skills. These are the skills needed to perform such tasks as reading the label on a food container, printing a boarding pass, navigating through unfamiliar cities, checking email, helping kids with homework, applying for a job and filling out a government form. Almost half of us have difficulties with what the other half takes for granted. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, between 1996 and 2006 the proportion of the total population with adequate or better prose literacy rose slightly from 52.5% to 53.6%, but in the 15-24 age group, the smart phone cohort, the numbers fell from 59.1% to 55.4%, a drop of more than 6%.

What chance do we have? We struggle to read this privileged position is more than sufficient reason for many libraries to review their approaches to customer service in today’s consumer and network-oriented Digital New Age.

The result of such analysis (incidentally the main building block of evidence-based practice and knowledge management) is a reaffirmation of service delivery in the context of providing safe places for people and ideas. But this time there is an additional element – indeed a funding imperative: extending services to new customers in order to provide a greater return on resources invested.

One of the wonders of the Digital New Age is that easily shared inventory control systems, library-based digitisation projects, and consortium licensing arrangements reduce the incremental costs of growth. It no longer costs a thousand times more to reach a million customers than it does to reach a thousand. So roll on the coalescing of phones and all other types of computers, and bring on the National Broadband Network; libraries will continue to be safe places for people, stories and ideas. Durable, Necessary and Adaptable.

Ian McCallum
Libraries Alive!
ian@librariesalive.com.au
We are all the same...

Geneticist Mary-Claire King wrote in 1993: “Our genetic differences are at the heart of one of the most fascinating paradoxes of the human condition: that we are all different, yet we are all the same”. It is as true of fingerprints as it is of library and information service professionals – while we may do wildly different things in vastly different places, the core values – the DNA – that holds the profession together, is very much about a shared philosophy and dedication to a common good.

In the following pages you will read various articles inspired by our theme, ranging from our guest OPINION columnist Ian McCallum’s view that libraries are “Durable, Necessary and Adaptable”, to Doreen Sullivan’s warning about the risks of good DNA gone bad, and the State Library of New South Wales’ innovative move to use a special collection as a training ground in the basics for new graduates.

Throughout, there is a common message: it’s ok to “stick to our knitting” as long as we’re flexible about the pattern. In other words, library DNA remains strong and healthy. In a typical day in the office, library and information professionals are simply splicing in the good stuff that’s new, such as the new technologies of delivery, while standing our ground on the old stuff that’s good – connecting people with the information they need to do what they need to do and protect our culture and communities.

It’s a great genetic blueprint for May’s public advocacy focus on all the good that libraries do with Library and Information Week looming and Information Awareness Month already underway.
**Classic skills**

Like any interesting collection, the Penguin Books Collection at the State Library of NSW is more than the sum of its parts. Its care requires those heartland skills of which library and information professionals are so proud. It may be taking a while to get the job done but it’s also turned into a great training ground.

Seeing almost 3000 of these publishing icons arranged in chronological order in the library’s rare books stack is an impressive sight. For Jan-Amanda Harkin, one of four entry-level librarians given the task of cataloguing the Penguins, the collection has great appeal. “The public has an affection for the Penguins,” says Jan, “when they started in 1935 it gave people access to affordable, but quality, literature.” Her colleague Michael Carney is just as hooked. “The whole series is a document of popular literature at the time,” he says.

When the collection was purchased by the State Library of NSW in 1981 it was one of the largest sets of Penguins ever offered for sale, but 30 years later, the library still had no catalogue records for them. Then, in 2011, the launch of a training program for new librarians was seen as a chance to dig them out. “It’s ideal for beginning cataloguers,” says Coordinator of Bibliographic Access, Susanne Moir, “they’re challenging but not too difficult.” Susanne is keen to ensure that cataloguing continues to be valued as a key skill for librarians. Like all aspects of librarianship, changes to cataloguing in recent years amount to something of a revolution. “It’s not one size fits all anymore,” says Susanne. “Once there was a tendency to catalogue everything in the same way – at the same level. Now people need to understand the underlying principles and significance of the material and use more judgment.” Anatta Abrahams, Data Quality Librarian, who oversees the training program, emphasises the importance of the catalogue for people who use the library. “The catalogue underpins the library’s services for clients by providing access to the collection,” says Anatta.

For the trainees, it’s often a matter of finding an appropriate existing record, but for about 10% of the books none can be found. These records require original cataloguing on Libraries Australia and go from there to the State Library catalogue, the National Library’s Trove and WorldCat. It’s a collaborative effort that involves discussing the level of detail to be applied across the collection, and then consulting with colleagues as challenges come up such as translations (Georges Simenon’s Maigret novels feature strongly in the collection) and distinguishing between many different editions of popular works. The trainees also identify any conflicts in the catalogue.

The new librarians take on every aspect of the process, from retrieving the books from stack to slipping polyethylene strips with barcodes around the fragile covers. As could be expected, there are preservation issues with books produced cheaply for mass distribution. “They’ve been used, lent, read many times,” says Anatta. “Quite a few have jottings of their previous owners, even the occasional shopping list or phone number. It’s all part of their charm, and their purpose.”

The exceptionally thin paper of the 1940s editions highlights Second World War paper shortages.
The training program runs over 18 months and allows the librarians to move from cataloguing to helping clients in the State Reference Library and working with original materials. Rotating “gives you a great overview of the library,” says Jan. And knowing how the catalogue is structured is useful in the reading room. “It enables you to do a more efficient search for a client,” says Michael.

When they get back to their desks there are always more Penguins waiting. Just as the library turns its attention to them, these books have found a new lease of life on the internet with several blogs such as A Penguin a Week. Michael and Jan can see the appeal in reading them all. “But you’d have to start young,” says Michael. He’s been inspired to read The Postman Always Rings Twice, while Jan’s favourite title so far is With Mystics and Magicians in Tibet.

Ranganathan’s five laws of library science

Remember SR Ranganathan? In 1931, along with his principles for operation of a library system, he also proposed five laws of library science. While the “books” in question might actually be ebooks, a CD or a download, they are still considered to be a foundation of our philosophy.

1. Books are for use.
2. Every reader his [or her] book.
4. Save the time of the reader.
5. The library is a growing organism.

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When library DNA goes bad

The LIS profession is one where most of us become librarians by accident, often after other careers. So how can we claim that LIS workers are born not made? That the secret to success pounds through our DNA and is recognised in our genes?

Librarianship is a magpie trade. We trawl and plunder from different occupations—teaching, retail (booksellers in particular), and plump our nests with shiny precedents set by others. So why not nick some DNA while we’re at it, so long as our amalgams don’t go wrong?

The 1986 horror movie remake The Fly saw the DNA of the main human character fused with the DNA of a fly in an experiment gone bad. An awful creature is created as a result. But what does a hybrid man-fly have to do with libraries?

Bad DNA. In medicine bad DNA is associated with lymphoma type cancers and viruses like smallpox. In movies it most often results in the demise of the genetically-wonky mutant. And in libraries, while there are some terrific initiatives in the cross-fertilisation of the library with say, the hospital or the café, we need to take care that we do not transform so much as to become unrecognisable.

In DNA fingerprinting forensics, miniscule debate questions whether fingerprints are unique. But with DNA in general, and fingerprints in particular, both are unique enough: at least, unique enough for species identification. Libraries – and library and information professionals – often do our utmost to morph into any identity but the one with the ‘L’ word. Yet our DNA gives us away.

Libraries and library and information workers should celebrate our distinctive markers. No matter what we do, we can’t hide them. Maybe giraffes yearn to be alligators, but you know what? Not going to happen.

For several years some libraries have modelled their layout on those of bookstores, both in how books are grouped together and with the inclusion of a café. Yet Borders bookstores collapsed in 2011. Perhaps libraries too need to re-think: What is it we do that separates us from the bookshop?

Academic libraries offer multiple electronic resources, perhaps like Amazon.com, and space for students to gather. What is it we do that separates us, our services, from a website or a community hall? Though we fuse well with these examples, let’s not discount nor apologise for what we, the library and information services profession, can uniquely provide – such as equitable and long-tail access to resources.

My plea? Let’s not alter our DNA so much we transform into a human-fly crossbreed that gets its brutal comeuppance in the final scenes. If we want to stick around in the 21st century, let’s separate out – and celebrate – the DNA sequences that make us LIS workers and workplaces, regardless of whether we’re born this way or if we have the DNA strands spliced in later.

Doreen Sullivan
RMIT University Library
doreen.sullivan@rmit.edu.au
Protecting the school library genome

While public and state libraries play a vital role in supporting and improving literacy and reading, Georgia Phillips says school libraries are fundamental – and their contribution needs to shine and be showcased in this National Year of Reading.

In the 1960s, the Library Association of Australia (LAA, now ALIA) led the political lobbying to establish school libraries. It commissioned the Fenwick Report, and published standards and objectives. A plan of action presented to the Prime Minister in 1967 by the LAA included the establishment of a relevant federal body and advisory committee, recruitment of an overseas advisor, establishment of demonstration school libraries, teacher librarian training, and then a grants program to all schools.

At the same time, the Australian Library Promotion Council (ALPC) commissioned Margaret Trask’s school libraries report, which highlighted how shocking school library funding was in Australia. In 1968, the then Federal Minister for Education and Science, Malcolm Fraser, implemented Commonwealth grants of $57 million for buildings, furniture, equipment and resource materials relating to secondary school libraries from 1969-1974.

While the 70s were halcyon days for school libraries here in Australia, little did we realise the rise of Thatcherism in England would predicate a movement toward self-managed schools here – and this would spell their downfall. For almost three decades, since the Kennett government in Victoria started the move to school autonomy in 1993, well-staffed school libraries have suffered the attrition of qualified teacher librarians. Principals forced to run schools on ever-decreasing, “devolved” budgets have had to rationalise staffing, sacrificing specialist teachers.

Fifteen teacher librarian (TL) training courses shrank to three. Central school library services were dismantled. TL staffing dwindled to 13% of primary schools in Victoria, 23% in Tasmania, and 8.6% in the Northern Territory. School library budgets shrunk to $1000 in many secondary schools or to nothing in many primary schools.

In 2008 the Australian School Libraries Research Project (a joint project of ALIA and the Australian School Libraries Association) revealed the extent of the demise of school libraries nationally and the wide gaps created between sectors. In 2010, the House Inquiry into School Libraries and Teacher Librarians, initiated by a petition of 1800 librarians and school library supporters, highlighted the full effects of the devolution epidemic.

But the rallying cry of local empowerment drowns out the fact that no evidence exists that the School-Based Management (SBM) approach improves student outcomes. Queensland academic Bob Lingard found in 2002 that there is no convincing evidence to justify SBM on the basis of improved educational outcomes. Scott Fitzgerald and Al Rainnie in WA concurred in 2011.

“What is staggering,” says Ballarat Education Professor John Smyth, “is the absence of any evidence showing that dismantling public schools, actually produces any better learning for students.” He goes on to say measures such as choice, school selection, baseline assessment, league tables, naming and shaming, national assessment, and others are needed to marketise education but are also resulting in social polarisation as some schools attract bright students and funding, and the rest are “left behind in struggling circumstances”.

Meanwhile, the real and plentiful evidence that school libraries, when well-staffed and resourced, do improve literacy and learning has been ignored. Lonsdale’s literature survey in 2003, the Scholastic Research Foundation paper School libraries work! updated in 2008, and the impact study done just last year at Mansfield University provide excellent summaries of this evidence.

We know that libraries improve literacy. Teacher librarians improve literacy. They promote the love of reading and build the literacy skills (including spelling, grammar, vocabulary and writing skills) which are a key to the digital age. Softlink Australia has found “a significant positive relationship between a school’s National Assessment Program: Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) reading literacy score, the budget and staffing allocated to the school library”.

Recently in the US, the American Library Association President has launched a Special Presidential Task Force on School Libraries, saying “This task force will lead a campaign addressing the urgent need for advocacy for school libraries, as well as the impact of the de-professionalisation and curtailment of school library instructional programs on students and student achievement.”

It is time for the entire library profession in Australia to do likewise and to engage in the struggle to save school libraries. Let’s ensure that once again Australia’s school libraries are the best in the world.

Georgia Phillips
co-founder, The Hub: Campaign for Quality School Libraries in Australia

Note: to read ALIA’s submission to the 2010 House Inquiry or other submissions by ALIA, visit www.alia.org.au/advocacy/submissions/
A whole new game

Queensland University of Technology is mixing up some new DNA with a new take on literacy support.

Imagine you’re a new student at university. It’s not like high school, or home. It’s not like your job or anything you’ve experienced before. The ‘academy’ has its own language to describe perplexing routines which bring challenging demands and unrevealed expectations. You feel that others know how to play in this scholarship game but you didn’t get the instructions and you know you need to know something but you’re not sure what... if only you had the right key to the right door, you might get help and get in the game before it’s too late. But what – or who – is the key and where is that door in a university?

At QUT, that key and that door is... the library? Yes. Stepping beyond traditional information literacy support, we’ve accepted a bold new responsibility for academic literacy and learning support as well. Now, QUT Library provides consolidated support for writing, reading, presenting, researching, studying, and learning. Now, we are campus hubs for personal formal and informal academic assistance, always.

Now, we are the most extensively provisioned single learning service in their university which connects them to other study and learning support, quickly. Now, we leverage the library’s trusted advantage of academic neutrality and reputation for service excellence to bring services that are reliable and relevant to each and every student, academically. At last, as one agency with an integrated service portfolio for student learning support, we can focus on one simple goal – deliver a one-stop learning solution for students which will lead them to greater academic confidence – and success.

So, as a student, how would you like personalised face-to-face and virtual research and study assistance from professional staff and student peer advisers on every campus over 90 hours a week? Tick. Maybe 24/7 access to quality academic independent learning resources? Tick. How about extracurricular and course-integrated workshops to help you to study successfully? Tick. Want to ask one person once and get answers to a hatful of unasked but frustrating questions? Tick. Tick. Tick.

Modeled on a ‘no wrong door’ principle, our strategic and operational initiatives are client-focused, student-centred, personal and ‘right’ for each student in terms of relevance, access and timeliness. By leveling up from information literacy to include academic literacy, our library is the new ‘first place’ to seek help, find answers, learn how to study and study how to learn.

With this organisational mandate, the library’s services also play a significant role in ensuring greater joined-up learning support infrastructure across the University – and we’ve made a discovery. We are good at more than we realised and better for students than we have ever been before. And all it took was a little re-imagination of what we had come to believe of ourselves and what others had believed of us. We all thought we were “just the library”. We were wrong.

Yes, it’s a whole new game for students and a whole new adventure for us but, because we’ve leveled up, everyone’s a winner. Now it’s game on!
Information plus people

Our DNA is all about getting that information and passing it on, says Tim Ormsby.

In a recent episode of Dr Who called Silence in the Library, the Doctor finds himself in a library in the 51st century (I assume RDA would have been implemented by then). This library covers an entire planet and contains every book ever written; the Doctor muses about whole continents of Jeffrey Archer. Apart from the fact that working in this library would be incredible (sans the flesh eating aliens), for me this episode highlights the genes that go to make up the DNA of libraries.

The library the Doctor visits has a collection that would turn any library professional green with envy, with the possible exception of cataloguers. Regardless of the fantastical scale, it highlights what has been at the core of our profession from the start: the collection of knowledge. Like the library in Dr Who, the original library at Alexandria was built to collect all the knowledge of the world. This is pretty much the raison d’être of libraries. It is what we have always done and what we will always do in one form or another. It is such a prominent part of our DNA and provides the bedrock on which all our other services are built. The library in Dr Who represents the library in its purest, most basic form. But we all know that today’s libraries do so much more than just books. The reduction of the library to just books in the episode is also a statement about the DNA of our industry in itself.

The portrayal of the library in Dr Who is a very romantic one: multi-storied columned halls with endless floor-to-ceiling shelves holding books as far as the eye can see. When volunteering at the State Library of South Australia, the visitors for whom I gave tours inevitably didn’t want to see the newly refurbished working library. They want to see the historical Mortlock Wing that holds the old Circulating Library collection of 30,000 or so books. This beautiful building closely resembles the library in Dr Who. I think this is how a lot of people still see today’s libraries, perhaps not realising they offer so much more in terms of physical and virtual resources, but still somehow understanding that knowledge dwells within those shelves. This shows that our fundamental DNA, the collection of knowledge, is ingrained not just in our industry, but is deeply ingrained in the collective consciousness of society in general.

However, collecting knowledge is only one part of our DNA. We don’t collect it in a vacuum but collect it so that others can access it. We catalogue so that people can find items in our collections. To hold the catalogue of the planet-sized library in Dr Who, the entire core of the planet is one massive hard drive. To guide patrons around the library and help them find what they’re looking for (or as in the episode, warn people of alien invasion) the library in Dr Who has courtesy nodes – robots with real faces donated to the library grafted onto them (possibly the 51st century equivalent of donating a park bench). As a librarian, I haven’t had to advise patrons of hostile aliens (yet), but I am constantly guiding patrons and helping them find what they need. Helping people find information forms a significant part of our DNA and it too has been there from the very beginning. Way back in Alexandria, copies of scrolls would be made available to scholars who required them.

So customer service forms a large part of what library and information professionals do, no matter what kind of service we work in. Giving patrons a great information-seeking experience in the library has become much more important than ever in recent years as we are no longer seen as the sole gatekeepers of knowledge. Thanks to Google and the internet. As information professionals though, our customer service genes can give people a much better information-seeking experience than these newcomers. In the words of author Neil Gaiman, “Google can bring you back 100 000 answers, a librarian can bring you back the right one.”

The DNA of our industry consists of the double helix of collecting knowledge and providing access to it. These strands have been there from the beginning but like all DNA, they will mutate as the forms of information and delivery methods change. However, their basic nature will endure and no matter what form libraries will have taken by the 51st century, they will still be the core of what librarians do. (That, and fighting off alien invasions.)

Tim Ormsby
	timormsby@adam.com.au

While being a lifelong user of libraries, Tim is new to the library industry, having completed his library graduate diploma last year. He is currently working casually at Mitcham Library and Flinders University Library in Adelaide and is loving every second of it. Tim is also a South Australian co-ordinator for the ALIA New Graduates Group.
Playing with our metaphors

Libraries belong to the human environment, so Suzana Sukovik says the gene metaphor appearing throughout this issue of INCITE should be adjusted because really, it’s all about memes, not genes. A meme can be a cultural or behavioural element and is passed on, not through genetics, but most often through imitation. Here Suzana explains the usefulness of this idea and two recent research articles as a starting point for creativity in the workplace.

Libraries seemed to be on everyone’s lips at the recent inaugural conference of the Australasian Association for Digital Humanities. We heard that libraries can be trusted with research data – to collect, organise, preserve and provide access to large data sets for many generations to come. Researchers count on librarians for support in using digital tools and methods. I was pleased to confirm that everything was fine with the world and the library is still the humanist’s laboratory.

I tend to see the humanists’ use of the library as litmus paper indicating changes in the information environment. This is why it was also interesting to note that the library was described as large, supportive and passive. However, agile and creative behaviours are currently enabled only by recessive genes. Like genes, memes can be very persistent, but they can be affected more easily by our actions. To mix my metaphors, the agile, creative and fast library is a recessive meme, even non-existent in some circles. But, as any child or a fiction reader can tell you, make-believe is very powerful in bringing ideas into existence.

While a need for innovation has been well-recognised in the information field, organisational creativity has been rarely discussed in libraries. Two recent articles about creativity report congruent approaches and findings, focusing on the importance of playfulness in fostering creativity in libraries. The article Innovation: the language of learning libraries (Bergart and D’Elia 2010) reports results of an experimental training program called Innovation Boot Camp in a Canadian academic library, while Playing with the future: library engagement and change (Sukovic, Litting, and England 2011) reports experiences from the University of Technology, Sydney Library.

Authors of both articles describe projects involving experimentation with play and creativity for organisational purposes, and present results of their research studies arguing for the importance of play in developing creativity and innovation.

The Canadian paper describes an innovation-training program “in which participants engaged in playful activities designed specifically to inspire, energise, and challenge them to become more innovative at work. The

From our collection


ALIA online journals: www.alia.org.au/onlineLISresources

Australian paper proposes engagement through serious play as a way of dealing with change and exploring future possibilities. Two library projects are described as examples of how playful engagement can be used for strategic planning and evaluation of the projects is based on data gathered from a number of sources, including surveys.

To make an agile and creative information space, even in a big and passive library, we need to play with possibilities. With some research-based evidence to guide our changing practices, we can strengthen both our analytical and creative minds and reputations. The two articles are a good place to start when you go looking for ideas.

Dr Suzana Sukovic
Head of Learning Resource Centre, St. Vincent’s College Research Associate, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, University of Sydney
suzana.sukovic@gmail.com
Aspects of privacy

I use LinkedIn as a means of developing and maintaining a professional network – although I find the continuing posts about who is now connected to whom is really of limited benefit. Recently though I’ve become more concerned about privacy issues with all social networking sites. At some time in the past I may have given LinkedIn access to my address book on Gmail because I seem to get lots of suggestions for connections that could only have come from that source. What happened recently though took it to a new level.

A person from the publishing world whom I’d never met asked to be connected. I got in touch with him to see who he was, and he satisfied me that we had a vague link so I accepted the invitation. The next day, an unsolicited mail arrived in my Gmail account from his publishing house. Now, my Gmail address is not generally known so I’m wondering if this is an astonishing coincidence or is this data leaking from LinkedIn? Or are we just becoming a little too paranoid?

I later found out how he might have got and used my Gmail address. When I responded to him to ask how he knew me, the message was sent from Gmail. He then felt free to add this to his address book to spam me. He and I are no longer connected.

More to it than meets the eye

Although I am no longer directly responsible for WCAG 2.0 (www.w3.org/WAI/Intro/wcag.php) compliance for government websites, I still take an interest in the subject. So I attended a presentation on a compliance tool that performs a comprehensive machine-based check on web resources to see how they comply with the guidelines. We were all quite surprised to see that around 95% of our websites would fail at present. I’d done some rudimentary checking a year ago and felt quite confident that our sites would be in an acceptable state by the end of 2012 – as required by the National Transition Strategy (NTS, www.finance.gov.au/publications/wcag-2-implementation/index.html). But now I know that we can’t make it without a lot of work between now and then. And I’m assured by the suppliers of the checking tool that the other states and territories are in a similar position. Which leads me to ask: should the NTS be re-evaluated?

The pros and cons of piracy

Lloyd Shepherd wrote an article in The Guardian about what happened when he found a book of his about to be pirated (tinyurl.com/73vtx3l) – and it started off a full-scale and generally polite discussion on copyright infringement and theft. At the end of three days of discussion, a couple of things were clearer to me: all analogies break down sooner or later – and many of us are quite unwilling to admit that what we continue to do is legally, morally and ethically wrong.

Another side of social media

In a story about recruitment practices in the age of social media at tinyurl.com/6sd356i, a Sheriff’s Office is reported to require job applicants to sign into social media sites so that they can be screened. Apparently they have the right to refuse to do this, but none have done so. The Sheriff’s Deputy said that this speaks well of their applicants. Well… no… it doesn’t really.

Wikipedia: how’s it going?

It used to be that the elites derided Wikipedia because, well, it wasn’t Britannica. Or some other reason. Anyway they derided it. Now, it’s pretty well in the mainstream, and we all use it without thinking too much about the original criticisms. And then a story comes along that makes you realise what’s happening behind it all, and it’s not a pretty sight. Danny Sullivan, a noted expert on search engines, wrote about his experiences in trying to get something fixed in Wikipedia (dagle.com/closed-unfriendly-world-wikipedia-2853) and received the usual blend of cheers and boos from the usual suspects. The quote that I liked from the comments was:

“And that’s why Wikipedia can’t replace all other encyclopedias – because, in fact, it’s still a hermetic encyclopedia, but without experts on subjects it covers.”

More on my blog www.alia.org.au/webbsblog
New app and conference mentoring in Sydney next month

The theme of this month’s INCITE revolves around the DNA of library and Information professionals. I would think that an essential part of that DNA is the desire to constantly learn and develop. The ALIA Biennial Sydney 2012 will certainly cater to that!

An essential component of any conference is the associated trade exhibition, and most delegates schedule time to visit the vendors and explore the latest developments, source new solutions and catch up on the goss. Our exhibition will be spread over two floors and, due to overwhelming demand, extra space has now been allocated to cater for more exhibitors. And, building on the conference theme of Discovery, our new conference app will make it easy for delegates to find your way around and catch up with old favourites or explore new opportunities.

If you’re reading this and you’re a potential sponsor/exhibitor, check out the customisable sponsorship options Sydney 2012 offers you to create your own conference exhibition package – for the first time ever, you pick and choose how to promote your brand. Find out how at conferences.alia.org.au/alia2012/sponsors.html.

For first-time delegates, our exhibition area is a veritable Aladdin’s cave and we would encourage you to schedule some serious time to discovering all that is on offer. Wide screen TVs in the exhibition spaces will ensure that you don’t miss out on the exciting line-up of keynote speakers and other conference highlights as you go.

For this Biennial we’ll also be offering another new experience for ‘newbies’. If you’re a little apprehensive about navigating conference programs, trade exhibitions, and social events this could be the ticket for you! Through the conference mentoring program we can pair a seasoned conference attendee (a mentor) with delegates who have limited experience of attending large conferences (mentees). Your mentors are all experienced conference-goers who are looking forward to guiding you through the Biennial experience. They can show you the tricks to getting the most out of the program, using the networking opportunities and enjoying the whole conference experience.

This program is open to all attendees of ALIA Biennial 2012. Registration for the conference mentoring program is available through the online conference registration system.

Over 300 delegates are already registered for Sydney 2012 and spaces are filling fast so don’t delay – register now!

Jan Richards
jrichards@orange.nsw.gov.au

Registrations for ALIA Biennial 2012 are now open!
conferences.alia.org.au/alia2012/register
Events May 2012

This is just a taste of the events on offer across the library and information sector. For a comprehensive and up-to-date list, check the website at www.alia.org.au/events.

**NATIONAL**

15 May – Australian Library and Information Association Annual General Meeting
6pm the Ferguson Room, National Library of Australia.
Contact: rob.miller@alia.org.au, 02 6215 8220

21–25 May – Library and Information Week 2012
www.alia.org.au/liw
Contact: Christina Granata, 02 6215 8222, events@alia.org.au

23 May – National Simultaneous Storytime 2012
www.alia.org.au/nss
Contact: Erin York 02 6215 8222, events@alia.org.au

24 May – Libraries Celebrate Cancer Council’s Biggest Morning Tea
www.biggestmorningtea.com.au
Contact: Erin York 02 6215 8222, events@alia.org.au

10-13 July – Discovery: Annual Biennial 2012 Conference
Contact: Christina Granata, 02 6215 8222, events@alia.org.au

**ACT**

May 31 – Value of Libraries Symposium
www.alial.org.au/groups/active
Contact: Erin York 02 6215 8222, events@alia.org.au

**NSW**

10 July – Health Libraries Australia Professional Development Day
Speaking Systematics: Primer on Systematic Reviews for Health Librarians
www.hla2012.blogspot.com.au
Contact: Erin York 02 6215 8222, events@alia.org.au

**QUEENSLAND**

21 May – ALIA Qld Trivia Night
5:30pm, Irish Club, Elizabeth Street, Brisbane
Contact: Vicki McDonald vicki.mcdonald@qut.edu.au

**VICTORIA**

22 May – National Library Technicians Day Dinner
6:30, Wharf Hotel, Melbourne
Contact: Kerrie Kelly ph 038664 7155, kelly@slv.vic.gov.au

24 May – Library Week celebration
5:30-7:30 RMIT Swanston Library
Margie Anderson ph 0404 471 404, margie.anderson@alia.org.au

Want to list your event on the ALIA website? Group members and office bearers – don’t forget to upload your event at www.alia.org.au/events/add. Not an ALIA event? Your LIS event may also be eligible to be added to our non-ALIA events. Contact events@alia.org.au for more information.
WE HAVE SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

*THINK OUTSIDE THE BOOK*

LIBRARY & INFORMATION WEEK
20-26 MAY 2012
ALIA NEWS

Volume 33 Issue 5 May 2012

Promote, promote, promote!

ALIA has produced three new posters for Library and Information Week 2012, especially designed to be used well beyond May. Promote your services all year with these great images.

We also have bookmarks, badges and ALIA @your library® eco bags. Check out all the new designs and download your order form at www.alia.org.au/liw/merchandise.

For further information please visit www.alia.org.au/LIW or contact our events team at events@alia.org.au or phone (02) 6215 8222.
ALIA research grants and awards now open

Applications for the Research Grants and Twila Ann Janssen Herr Award are now open. As the peak body for the library and information industry, ALIA is committed to supporting and promoting research within our sector. These grants and awards are dedicated to assisting members to further their research goals and support the development of excellence in knowledge and practice in the library and information services sector.

ALIA Research Grants provide funding of up to $5000 and are open to practising librarians or library technician members who have been personal financial members for at least two years, and with a minimum of three years’ experience at the time of application.

These grants are designed to assist professional members to undertake projects they would otherwise be unable to consider because of the time and costs involved. Recipients are supported to undertake a study program on a selected library or information issue of present and future relevance to the development and improvement of library and information services in Australia. The project may include preliminary work, local or overseas visits and/or consultations, attachment to another organisation, or preparation of a publication. It is expected that the project will provide an opportunity for self-development as well as benefit the recipient’s institution and present position.

Full details of the Research Grants can be found at www.alia.org.au/awards/research.grant.

The Twila Ann Janssen Herr Award for early career library and information services supports practitioners undertaking research in the area of information services for people with a disability. It is named after Twila Herr, FALIA and life member of the Association, in recognition of her tireless work in the pursuit of excellence in library and information services, in particular services to those with a disability, the disadvantaged and senior citizens.

This award aims to encourage research and projects that explore the potential for further development of existing Australian services for people with a disability, investigations into the use of emerging technologies in the provision of access to services for those with a disability, or aiming to increase the knowledge and skills of practising library and information professionals in services for people with a disability. For more information on this award, visit www.alia.org.au/awards/herr.disability.


With Library Week and National Simultaneous Storytime almost upon us, the spotlight this month is well and truly on public libraries. Which means it’s a good moment to ponder the work of the ALIA Public Library Advisory Committee (PLAC). PLAC is just one of ALIA’s advisory committees working on behalf of members to advocate for the profession. PLAC provides a pivotal role linking public libraries and ALIA so that together we can work towards maximising the outcomes for the public library network across Australia. ALIA PLAC works with local representatives from each state on advocacy projects such as production of the ALIA National Standards and Guidelines for Public Libraries and the ALIA Internet.

Romancing the future

ALIA members travel far and wide and work in many different places. Recently, ALIA member Madeleine Lefebvre was reappointed for a second term as Chief Librarian of Ryerson University Library and Archives in Canada. Her tenure there has included significant achievements such as achieving acceptance of the University Library into the Canadian Association of Research Libraries – making it only the second academic library to attain such membership in 34 years. She also published a book in 2005, The Romance of Libraries (Scarecrow Press).

Now, as a member of the Student Learning Centre building committee, Madeleine is playing a major role in the design and development of Ryerson’s learning centre for the 21st century. Her vision for the expanded library space will incorporate collaborative learning and innovative digital technologies and she has shared the link with us to give her fellow members a peak at the action: www.ryerson.ca/ryersonbuilds/studentlearn.html.
Access in Public Libraries Survey.

In addition to working with local communities and government bodies to raise the profile of public libraries, PLAC also produces a monthly newsletter for all staff interested in public library issues.

ALIA PUBNEWS keeps subscribers up-to-date with news from the public library arena, both in Australia and internationally. PUBNEWS features the projects undertaken by ALIA specifically relating to public libraries, highlights relevant reports or professional reading, and puts the spotlight on training opportunities for public library staff.

Free subscriptions to PUBNEWS are available at www.alia.org.au/alianet/e-lists/aliapubnews.

Want to know more?
• PLAC: www.alia.org.au/governance/committees/public.libraries

• Contact your State or Territory Manager: www.alia.org.au/contacts
• ALIA’s membership team: membership@alia.org.au or the members’ line 1800 020 071

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Here’s another vision from the past from our ALIA 75th Anniversary competition – and it’s a winner!

Congratulations to Nathalie Cosmas who joins Joan Keating and Margie Anderson in the winners’ circle for our 75th anniversary competition. Nathalie, Joan and Margie will all receive a selection of signed copies of works by National Year of Reading authors Morris Gleitzman, Laura Buzo, Rod Moss, and Boori Monty Pryor and Jan Ormerod.

An honourable mention also goes to Jo-Anne Fuller for unearthing a bottle of ALIA commemorative wine. Many members will remember Jojo for her years of work for the Association, including being part of the team who moved the office from Sydney to Canberra – that’s one well-earned bottle of wine!

Cheers and happy anniversary to all.

The View from the Turn of the Century
May – June Courses

Project Management Tools and Techniques Workshops
This one day workshop covers the basic tools and techniques for project management. Delivered in plain English and applied to the projects and events managed in a library setting.
**PD category:** Informal Learning
**PD points:** 7
**Dates:** Hobart 15th and Perth 20th June. Various locations and dates planned for 2012: please check the ALIA Training web page.
**Registrations Close:** 2 weeks prior to course date

Managing Challenging Clients Workshops
Understand and deal with clients who are suffering from problems related to mental illness, disability or substance abuse. Includes causes, definitions and symptoms, behavior management, and self-management.
**PD category:** Informal Learning
**PD points:** 7
**Dates:** Canberra 8th and Adelaide 30th May. Various locations and dates planned for 2012: please check the ALIA Training web page.
**Registrations Close:** 2 weeks prior to course date

Fundamentals of Supervision Workshops
An introduction or refresher to the essential skills of staff supervision.
**PD category:** Informal Learning
**PD points:** 7
**Dates:** Canberra 7th and Perth 21st June. Various locations and dates planned for 2012: please check the ALIA Training web page.
**Registrations Close:** 2 weeks prior to course date

Book and Journal Repair Workshop
Hands-on workshop. Understand structure, common problems and the best approach for repair. Bring along an item for advice.
**PD category:** Informal Learning
**PD points:** 7
**Dates:** Sydney – 25 June
**Registrations Close:** 12 June

For all course details and to register visit:
www.alia.org.au/training
Call for presentations for MyLanguage conference

Organisers of the MyLanguage national conference are calling for conference presentations for their second MyLanguage Conference, to be held in Brisbane in August.

MyLanguage Conference 2012 will be hosted by the State Library of Queensland with MyLanguage project partners Public Libraries South Australia, the State Libraries of New South Wales, Victoria, Western Australia and Libraries ACT.

The conference will be held on the 7th and 8th of August, with satellite events such as tours and workshops will precede and follow the formal conference program. The conference themes include connecting communities, collaboration and creating opportunities for multicultural Australia. There will be a focus on the use of digital technology to empower cultural and linguistically diverse communities to achieve greater social inclusion and maintain cultural and linguistic identity.

The MyLanguage partnership began in 2004. The State Library of Victoria manages the project and hosts the website, www.mylanguage.gov.au, which contains a wide range of information resources in over 65 languages to support public libraries and community groups with non-English language resources.

For further information on the conference, visit www.mylanguage.gov.au/conference.html
ERA review results on the way

In July last year the Executive Committee for Electronic Resources Australia (ERA) initiated a review of the operation and vision of the program. The review was undertaken to ensure that ERA continues to benefit and meet the expectations of Australian libraries and continues to make progress towards its objectives for national licensing in the short and long term.

This review was undertaken by a committee of representatives from each of the library sectors. During the review, the Review Committee sought input from libraries and vendors through a call for submission process. The Review Committee considered these submissions, as well as their own experience within their sectors, in developing the recommendations in the report. Earlier this year called for feedback from the sector on the report and the ERA Executive’s response to the recommendations, and conducted an online product survey to determine priority products for libraries and sectors that could be candidates for national or sectoral licences through ERA.

As INCITE goes to press, this feedback is being collated. In next month’s issue, we will bring you an in-depth report on plans for the future of ERA and the results of the review.

Government moves to include digital in NLA legal deposit

Blogs, e-magazines, interactive newspaper articles and more could soon be joining the archives of the National Library of Australia to keep them alive for future generations if proposals released by the Federal Government on March 7 are implemented. This will ensure digital works join printed works as part of the National Library’s continuing remit in preserving Australia’s documented heritage.

The Attorney-General Nicola Roxon and Minister for the Arts Simon Crean have launched a public consultation paper on the proposed reforms to the Copyright Act, designed to ensure that digital documents are kept by the National Library of Australia for future generations.

“The proliferation of electronic readers, smart phones and tablet computers means that publishers are increasingly making available and distributing works in an electronic only format,” Ms Roxon said.

The Government is seeking views on proposed changes that would modernise the current system to extend to electronic documents by empowering the Director-General of the National Library to request certain electronic material to be deposited.

“We want to ensure that these works are collected by the National Library and safeguarded for the benefit of all Australians,” Ms Roxan said.

Mr Crean said the proposed reforms were an appropriate response to changes within the arts and cultural sector.

“Australia’s cultural landscape is changing dramatically with an increase in digital content and convergent art forms,” Mr Crean said.

“As writers, publishers and creators move into digital formats, we need to ensure that we continue to preserve cultural content for all Australians to enjoy and appreciate.

“These changes will ensure future generations don’t miss out on Australia’s dynamic cultural heritage simply because the work was created digitally.”

The consultation paper Extending Legal Deposit and instructions for providing submissions are available online at www.ag.gov.au/Consultationsreformsandreviews/Pages/Extending-Legal-Deposit.aspx
Need to fill a vacancy?
Support the library industry and snatch up a professional using ALIA employment.
www.alia.org.au/employment/vacancies

CONTRIBUTORS INDEX
Hawthorne, Marilyn 28
McCallum, Ian 7
Ormsby, Tim 14
Peacock, Judith 13
Phillips, Georgia 12
Richards, Jan 17
Sukovic, Suzana 15
Sullivan, Doreen 11
Webb, Kerry 16

ADVERTISER INDEX
Abax Systems 23
Allied Pickfords 8 and insert
American Psychological Association 4
Chess Moving Australia 27
Emerald Group 3
JOPA 26
Maxus 11
National Library of Australia 22
OCLC Back cover
Paper World 13
Scholastic Australia 6
SWETS 10
Tag- Alert Insert
University of SA 25
Marilyn Hawthorne is the Assistant Director, Northern Territory Library (NTL), providers of library services in partnership with local government across the Northern Territory. These services include supporting public libraries and knowledge centres in very remote indigenous communities facing significant challenges, including a lack of basic community service infrastructure, low levels of literacy and periodic isolation when transport routes are out of action. NTL is currently implementing the Northern Territory segment of the Federal Government’s Closing the Gap: National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Public Internet Access (RIPIA) program. Marilyn reports on progress and how the NT ALIA network has helped raise the profile of this important program.

RIPIA is a joint Northern Territory and Federal Government-funded four year program, born out of the 2008 Regional Telecommunications Independent Review and subsequent Glasson Report. A key initiative from the review is a refocussed Indigenous Communications Program to improve basic telecommunication services, basic public internet access and training to remote Indigenous communities.

NTL was asked in late 2009 by the NT Government to implement the RIPIA program. At that time NTL was focused on a Libraries & Knowledge Centres’ program that at that time supported 22 remote libraries. Accepting responsibility to implement the RIPIA program was a great challenge for our library staff to take on in addition to regular programs. Of the 40 sites across the NT selected by the Federal Government for RIPIA, only 18 were in sites where NTL already had contacts or gave support to an existing remote library.

RIPIA has two components, installing hardware, software and internet access, giving appropriate training, and then maintaining equipment, access and training. Strategies to implement RIPIA have included working to engage local stakeholders and community members, leveraging existing NTL programs and using both experienced NTL staff, and contracting other people with good networks and knowledge as necessary. Initial site-scoping visits revealed many had no working public internet access, no usable building or room, or no organisation to care for new resources.

We found many stakeholders and useful helper contacts onsite and discovered that planning with community personnel before arriving onsite is essential.

The NTL team has taken advantage of a range of existing programs or opportunities to assist progressing RIPIA, including Broad Band for Seniors, the satellite subsidy scheme, the re-use of old NT Government computers and partnering with the One Laptop per Child organisation. Solutions for internet supply have also required compliance with NT intervention laws on internet filtering.

Implementing this program has had the added benefit of upskilling within the team and our colleagues. The RIPIA team, along with others in NTL, are now using new technologies and web tools such as the Webex Conferencing software for e-mentoring and e-meetings and our team members have honed their skills in lateral thinking, teamwork, goodwill and commitment.

RIPIA has given NTL opportunities to explore new ways of working with various technologies, for better outcomes. New connections with other useful organisations have been made, and existing NTL programs have been enhanced by the RIPIA program.

We have found working with other organisations and individuals in remote communities is critical to achieving any success.

Marilyn Hawthorne
marilyn.hawthorne@nt.gov.au
Let’s keep creating sharing dreaming learning working digitising improving gathering innovating discovering building advocating collaborating

Connecting the world’s libraries to operate and innovate at Webscale

OCLC WorldShare provides a Web-based platform for collective innovation with shared services, integrated applications and a streamlined approach to managing library workflows. Together with WorldCat, WorldShare helps the world’s libraries connect in new ways to operate, innovate and collaborate at Webscale.

Australia@oclc.org
www.oclc.org/go/au/en/worldshare