

Front Line



Bev Kirby
ALIA President

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THE 1992 ALIA Biennial Conference will begin very shortly in Albury-Wodonga. I look forward to meeting so many people, from every state and with many backgrounds and interests.

But what of those unable to be in Albury-Wodonga? Can the Conference mean something to all members? I believe that it can and it does.

ALIA's Strategic Plan, the Vision, Mission, Goals and Objectives presented in this issue of *inCite*, looks forward at the environment affecting libraries and library services over the next five to ten years. To look afresh at our reasons for existence and to develop a mission for the future was an important exercise. To confirm appropriateness of the four objects of the Association was pleasing. ALIA is on target. With its Strategic Plan and the strategies which will be endorsed to meet our objectives we will be ready to complete the planning process with program budgeting.

How does this conference or indeed any conference meet ALIA's goals and objectives? The goals of the proposed Strategic Plan cover leadership, advocacy and mutual support. ALIA conferences support these goals. They continue to be of benefit for many years. We benefit from the participation of others, meeting with them to share ideas. We benefit from the presentations as we read and discuss the published papers.

Every paper given, heard, read and or discussed then or in the future supports our goal of leadership. Leadership is provided through the Conference in the exhibition of new products and ideas.

In an earlier Front Line I looked at the role of ALIA in relation to other groups and associations in our profession. I claimed that ALIA provides an umbrella under which we bring together many different sections and levels of our profession. Conferences are a mechanism for maintaining such a support structure for our members. While the records of those conferences are important to the history of our profession, between now and the next conference they provide us with a focus for our development. The conference therefore makes a significant contribution to our corporate knowledge and the corporate identity.

All publicity, public relations and involvement of key decision makers in our conference supports our goal of advocacy. We offer participants the opportunity to develop lobbying skills.

Mutual support is evident when we exchange information with others. Mutual support exists in what we hear, see and take back to the workplace and to our colleagues. It is in the contacts we make, in forming and maintaining our networks. At a conference we see ourselves as part of a wider community.

As the conference gets closer members may have the opportunity to hear conference speakers who are travelling through. Watch for notices of this in *Events*.

The conference papers will be published and will remain as a permanent record of our coming together, of sharing information and of the exploration of common issues. I encourage you to read the conference papers and recommend their reading to your colleagues.

Ten years ago the Library Association of Australia held its 22nd Biennial Conference in Adelaide. In ten years we have come such a long way. A comparison of the sessions in Adelaide with those in Albury-Wodonga shows how much the environment has changed. The Adelaide conference was titled *Challenge and Response*. Judith Baskin in her address as President of the Library Association of Australia described the challenge as 'to provide the most cost-effective and appropriate library services to meet needs of the Australian community and the world community'.

The Conference concentrated on the effects of the information explosion on the delivery of library services and special areas such as censorship, copyright, literacy and marketing. In 1992 the challenge is to claim a role as major players in developing the 'clever country'. The focus is on the role of libraries in our society, on ensuring that we have the skills to claim our position as information specialists and on the methods of lodging and being successful with those claims.

Our conference in 1992 has some trendy session titles such as 'The Transparent Library', 'Beyond the Library', 'Library without Walls', 'Empowerment', 'Being Green', 'Imagining', and, 'Spheres of Influence' but the other sessions with more traditional titles also offer an opportunity to explore together the issues of today.

The library and information services profession in Australia will be the richer for Albury-Wodonga. Our ability to participate will not cease after the Conference ends. There is nothing new about us facing a challenge but every now and then we need to re-arm. Biennial conferences enable the development of our own picture of the world in which we work and the challenges ahead. What comes out of the Conference belongs to ALIA and its members. Let's wish Albury-Wodonga all the very best! ■