

ALIA has a new Executive Director

inCite has prepared this profile of Virginia Walsh as she moves into the National Office

On 16 August the staff of the National Office welcomed ALIA's new Executive Director. Virginia Walsh joins ALIA after spending the last few years as Executive Director of the Australasian Urban and Regional Information Systems Association (AURISA). AURISA's membership is drawn from New Zealand, Australia and the Asia Pacific Region and its structure is very similar to that of ALIA.

While experienced in all of the administrative and political aspects of managing a National Association through her work with AURISA and some other national associations on a consultancy basis, Virginia also brings to ALIA experience in business and the public sector.

She was recruited to the Commonwealth Public Service as an Administrative Trainee in 1976. This program, which only recently ceased, drew about thirty graduates each year from Australian universities to be trained for a senior management career in the public service. Before resigning from the service in 1981 Virginia worked in key policy departments including Prime Minister and Cabinet, Employment and Industrial Relations and the Public Service Board.

In 1981 Virginia embarked on a business career. She became well known in the decade that followed as the proprietor of The Lobby Restaurant, located opposite the old Parliament House. Scene of much political intrigue, The Lobby was, and remains, a venue well-patronised by influence-makers, -breakers and -brokers from business, politics and the media.

During the 1980s Virginia was appointed to a number of boards, serving on the National Tourism Advisory Council, the National Exhibition Centre Trust, and the ACT Restaurant & Catering Association. She was Deputy Chairperson of the ACT Electricity and Water Authority, the biggest government enterprise in Canberra, for over four years from 1988 to 1992. In this posi-

tion her talents were particularly directed towards issues of finance, funding and accounting and to the development of an Environment Policy and improved workplace practices.

Virginia has worked as a public policy consultant with ACIL Australia, and, for several years, conducted her own consultancy business, Amanuensis & Associates, specialising in the analysis of public policy issues and development of marketing plans for an unusual mix of clients.

During 1990 and 1991 she delivered the Marketing Principles course to students in Canberra undertaking the Graduate Management Qualification administered by the Australian Graduate School of Management at the University of NSW.

How does this mixture of career experiences relate to the duties of Executive Director of the Australian Library and Information Association? Virginia believes that *a large part of her job relates to a combination of administrative capability and capacity to promote the interests of the Association's constituency wherever and whenever this is required.* The ability to negotiate the political and bureaucratic channels is critical to success. This, combined with the ability to express the issues clearly and succinctly, will enable Virginia to build on the excellent work that has already been done by the National Office since its relocation to Canberra in 1988.

For those readers of *inCite* who may be interested in Virginia's 'extra curricular' interests, we



can report that she was once a very keen squash player, studied the flute at the Conservatorium of NSW, and has always been an avid reader. She has been involved in many music groups from jazz, rock, folk to classical and was a member of the Canberra band 'Salvation Jane', famous in the early 1980s for its all-woman line up and eclectic repertoire. She also studied sculpture at the Canberra School of Art. But because she has always been encouraged not to give up her day job, Virginia has relied on her more saleable skills as a communicator and administrator to pay the bills.

During her first weeks with the Association she will be seizing every opportunity to talk to ALIA members at various conferences and other meetings. She is excited by the prospects for libraries and information services in Australia, and is looking forward enthusiastically to her time with ALIA. From the next edition of *inCite* Virginia will write a regular report on Association activities and issues of interest to members. ■