



Virginia Walsh
Executive Director

In its fifth birthday issue *The Independent*, a monthly news and current affairs magazine, exhorted readers to 'put their money where their mind is'. So too with this Association. We receive inquiries regularly from individuals who are not members but are seeking assistance with information and advice. On these occasions we encourage callers to join—because one important source of funding for the services we provide is through membership subscriptions. Through membership of the Association you can also play an important role in determining the priorities and direction that the Association takes. You can elect to leadership positions those individuals who you believe are most capable of guiding the library and information sector through these times of great change. You can support our efforts directed towards developing a profile for the library sector within government and community circles.

After a couple of years of declining membership, we can report, half way through our membership year, that the numbers are starting to climb. We have already exceeded the targeted growth figure for this year and are close to achieving the membership numbers recorded in 1992. In part this is a reflection of improved economic circumstances and in part a reflection of the recognition of the important work being done by the National Office and by our 120 Divisions.

Last year we asked all of our Divisions to indicate the priorities for action in 1994. General Council distilled all of the issues that were identified and agreed that:

Underlying all of these issues is the importance of adopting an enhanced public profile through lobbying and establishing a position of influence with politicians in all spheres of government.

We are doing this at two levels. The first involves specific approaches concerning issues that arise in which

our members have a clear interest. In the last month we have either met, or corresponded with: The Hon. Peter Baldwin, Minister for Social Security, (access to information for social welfare recipients), Mr Mark Latham, Member for Werriwa (who has asked a number of questions in Parliament about ALIA standards for public libraries), The Hon. Gordon Bilney, Minister for Development, Cooperation and Pacific Island Affairs (about aid for libraries in the Asia Pacific region), Senator John Tierney, (about libraries in higher education). We are also involved in providing submissions to Government inquiries which have been the subject of previous reports in *inCite*.

The second step we have taken is to set up a National Action Electoral Strategy which was agreed to at the March General Council meeting and which has been developed into a comprehensive program targeting all members of the Federal Parliament and which will, in the run up to the next election, ensure that every candidate is aware of the issues that concern us. We have, as a preliminary step, established a database of all Federal and State politicians and will be providing state-based information to our Branches and Regional Groups to assist with local lobbying activities.

As part of our Electoral Strategy we are encouraging all members of the

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Association to provide us with any information that can be usefully incorporated into the database. Such information may relate to the relevant interests of a specific Member of Parliament (which may either support or oppose our interests). For example, at a recent meeting with Dee Margets, Western Australian Green Senator, she indicated that she had worked for four years in a school library. Such information is a valuable addition to our database. So please drop me a note or contact me through my e-mail (vwalsh@slim.slnsw.gov.au) if you have anything to contribute.

This month we are introducing a new column on networking. Many of us have access to the 'net and it is an increasingly valuable forum for communication. At ALIA we are in the process of establishing a bulletin board for the listing of Association activities and information on general issues such as summaries of General Council and Board of Education Meetings. In the past we have included some information about listservs that are of interest to our members (some have already been established by our Divisions). We thought that it was time we made this a regular feature of our newsletter. We hope that you find it of value. And remember, put your money where your mind is—if you are not a personal member of the Association, now is the time to join. ■

Stop press

The achievement of Australia's first trouble-free Enterprise Flexibility Agreement by ALIA and its staff has attracted favourable publicity. Executive Director Virginia Walsh was invited to outline the approach taken in an extensive interview on ABC Radio when the Agreement was described as a possible model for other employers. ABC commentator Michael Cavanagh gave particular emphasis to the fact that ALIA's Agreement, unlike many other such proposals, had been developed, drafted and negotiated entirely by our own staff without the involvement of lawyers or industrial relations consultants. A number of specialist industrial relations writers and commentators have also contacted the National Office to obtain further background.