

COMMITMENT TO THE CAUSE



Helen Tait

ALIA president

It is common to hear a refrain at this time of the year of disbelief that it is this time of the year. I am cautious about joining it because I am reliably informed that the speed with which the year passes is directly proportional to the age of the observer — making me in 1996 at least as old as the venerable Mr Levett, but I really cannot believe that this is the December *inCite* and time for some reflections on the year.

I have already mentioned in previous 'Frontlines' my strongest impressions from a year of meeting with members. Throughout the country I have been greatly impressed by the range, vigour, commitment, and energy of the contribution of such a large number of members to branches, sections, projects and activities of the Association. I have also been very impressed, through a closer association with ALIA National Office in general and our executive director in particular, with the great professionalism with which we are represented within the industry and the wider community. The combination of these two factors I believe gives us a great base on which to build as we head towards the 21st

century, and gives me great confidence that an immense amount can be achieved.

However I believe that we will only make strides towards the really important goals if we spend some time together clarifying and sharing them, putting our efforts into the things which will achieve most, and not letting ourselves get sidetracked by structures, procedures, rules and regulations — organisational requirements which can paralyse us and divert energy and effort.

By the time you read this we will have made a decision about the form of our participation with ACLIS and the National Library in a review of future support and co-ordination requirements of the profession and industry. I earnestly hope that the highlight of 1997 will be a breadth of view and a quality of discussion and planning which will provide for the vitality and recognition of the library and information sector in the 21st Century.

All the very best for Christmas and the new year — and for our future health and achievements. ■

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[above] At the Premier's function during ALIA96: Reading the future, Melbourne, October 1996: Victorian Premier Jeff Kennett (left) with ALIA President Helen Tait and IFLA President and keynote speaker Bob Wedgeworth.