

# A week in the life of an ALIA branch president

A significant part of the Branch presidents activities are devoted to lobbying

## Day 1

7:30am. Turn to page 3 of *The Age* to see article 'User-pays may be on the way, librarians warned' and say to son 'Whatever I thought I was doing this morning, I'm not. All hell is about to break loose'.

8:45am. E-mail executive director of ALIA to explain about *The Age* article when producer of Elaine Canty's 3LO program rings to ask that I be interviewed on air about the potential introduction of user charges for borrowing books in Victorian public libraries. Agree to be interviewed at 10.15 this morning.

9:00am. Start planning tactics. Ring executive director of ALIA to discuss plan.

9:30am. Ring public librarians to check accuracy of article. It isn't. Leonie Burke misquoted.

10:00am. Elaine Chanty's producer rings back. I say 'Article is inaccurate.' They say, 'Good, we had heard that too. Have minister for local government ready to be interviewed at 10:15am. You listen and comment at end of interview if necessary.'

10:30am. 3LO ring and have me on 'hold' so I can hear the interview with min-

ister Roger Hallam. He denies any borrower fees being considered and restates government policy which embodies free core services as a condition of public library subsidy. I decline to say anything on 3LO as minister has confirmed existing government policy.

11:00am. Fax letter to Leonie Burke stating ALIA realises she has been misquoted. Also offer our assistance in addressing issues facing public libraries due to the council amalgamation process.

11:30am. Fax letter to Minister Hallam, copy to Minister for the Arts, Haddon Storey, thanking him for the government's response to the issue of 'user pays' for public library borrowing.

2:00pm. Contact journalist who posted the AAP news article which was misquoted by *The Age*. Sent her information on ALIA and copies of correspondence on issue. Also offered to be of assistance if other library-related issues cropped up.

2:30pm. Tried to contact *The Age* journalist who wrote article. Unsuccessful.

During the day... Premier Kennett, ministers Hallan and Storey reported

in *Hansard* stating government support for free core public library services.

## Day 2

7:30am. *The Age* carries article reporting Hallam's support for free borrowing. *The Age* also carries editorial supporting free public library services.

## Day 3

10:15am. Warwick Dilly, chief executive officer with Nunawading Council is interviewed on Radio 3LO. He is pro-fees in public libraries.

11:30am. Personally deliver letter to editor of *The Age*, stating ALIA position on free public library services after attending ACLIS/ALIA Lobbying working party meeting. Letter not published.

1:30pm. Transcript of Dilly interview delivered.

4:00pm. Discuss transcript with executive director of ALIA. Emphasise ALIA needs a revised *Statement on free library services to all* which is defensible and pragmatic. Fax letter to executive director of ALIA reiterating this point.

## Day 3 and 4

Read Dilly transcript over weekend and get annoyed by comments.

## Day 5

11:00am. Decide to seek time on Elaine Canty's program to comment on Dilly interview and to put ALIA and ACLIS view. Plan interview strategy. Seek supporting information.

## Day 6

8:30am. Ring Elaine Canty's producer. They agree to interview me.

9:30am. Check facts with public librarians.

10.15am. Interviewed live to air on 3LO. Very nervous but feel interview successful. Sent transcript of interview.

## Day 7

Write joint article for *inCite* about need to have a revised *Statement on free library service to all*.

## And later...

Ring Ms Burke's office to seek meeting as follow-up to my letter. Meeting arranged. Rod Blacker, president of Public Libraries Section, agrees to attend meeting with me. Productive meeting with Ms Burke. All agree that something good came from the inaccurate *The Age* article in that ALIA has the strongest statement of support from Victorian government for about 20 years - for free core public library services. ■

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