



Critical issues facing the library and information sector?

The ability to adapt quickly and effectively to rapid change, while keeping the important basic principles in view will be critical. We must be proactive, positive, and seen to be ahead of the changes which are affecting all of society. We must remember that the thing which makes our profession unique is the ability to handle information — an increasingly valuable commodity. It

will be vital to leverage this knowledge and talent in the future. This will enable us to demonstrate our ability to help our communities and organisations achieve their goals. Working in partnerships with those within, and beyond, our organisations will be increasingly important if we are to obtain this leverage.

What effects do you consider wholesale changes in service delivery philosophy and policy might have for the sector?

The changes facing the industry must be seen as opportunities, not threats. Libraries, librarians, and information workers by any other name underestimate the value which their constituencies place on their services and the degree to which libraries are already highly-efficient and effective. In my first-hand experience with CCT in Victoria this is an ideal opportunity to create opportunities, focus on strengths and set new directions. We must use the new finance-based paradigms in which we work as an opportunity to prove our efficiency and effectiveness to our funding bodies.

Key outcomes from the ACLIS/ALIA merger?

The merger must create a strong organisation which truly acts as a peak body for the entire industry. To be successful, the merger must combine the personal and professional values already held and promulgated by both bodies into a one unified voice which can represent the industry to the outside world. This must be used as an opportunity to create a fresh, exciting image for the Association and its members.

My vision for the library and information sector?

My vision for the future is less important than my ability to synthesize, and represent the future vision of the industry held by the members of ALIA. Currently, I believe these could be summarised as:

1. A continuing need for print material — both archival material already held and newly-printed material.
2. An increased need for digitally based resources.
3. Information workers (who might be called librarians, or something else all together) which are seen as a critical part of their organization and community.
4. Information 'spaces'(physical, virtual, or a combination of both) which are the 'information switching centres' for their organisations and communities. These information spaces will be well run, well funded and highly respected. They will combine electronic, print, and other resources in a coherent, and accessible manner, and provide a service which no-one else can provide.

The critical success factors for the Association will include the ability to support members (both personal and institutional) through the change process, and represent the information sector to politicians, bureaucrats, the media, and the public in a positive and exciting way. There are a number of practical actions to be taken. These exist at three levels:

Personal level: *support; continuing education; empowerment of sectional groups.*

Institutional: *to act as an inter-institutional co-ordinating body; to set standards; to be proactive in obtaining political support for issues affecting libraries specifically, and/or broader societal issues on which the profession has specialist knowledge or viewpoints.*

Societal: *To raise the level of influence the profession has on key decision-makers.*

We are at a turning point in the history of information — in the coming decade, we will have opportunities which have not been present to western society since the invention of the book — our profession is in a unique position to seize these opportunities, and fulfill our mission as has never been possible before. We need an Association which can help all members through these tremendous changes and opportunities.

Curriculum vitae

Present position

Regional manager — Yarra Plenty Regional Library. Second-largest public library service in Victoria, with a budget of approximately \$6 000 000.

Previous positions

Senior library consultant — CLSI (Australia) and Geac Computers (8 years). Responsible for sales and support of turnkey library automation packages, as well as the introduction of the SilverPlatter range of CD-ROM databases into Australia. City librarian — City of Coburg

Professional activities

Presented with the ALIA Manager of the Year award in 1997, and was the VALA Travel Scholar in 1993. Twenty years continuous service on industry bodies, including ten years on the Public Libraries section, Victorian group committee, including one year as chair and three years as secretary to the group. Also president of Viclink from 1994–1996.

Statement of professional concerns

The Association must represent the professional and industry to the broader community. We must take a leading role in lobbying for better funding from the government and private sectors. We must provide a positive and progressive view of the profession and industry in both public and private sectors.

One of the greatest challenges facing ALIA is in supporting practitioners in balancing traditional responsibilities, while preparing for, and implementing new technologies. To assist in this role, ALIA must provide support for continuing professional development as well as a forum for debate and discussion of the challenging issues ahead.

The merger of ALIA and ACLIS gives us an unprecedented opportunity to build a new organisation for the 21st century — we must seize this opportunity.

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Critical issues facing the library and information sector?

Libraries now operate in a highly-competitive environment, where customers move around to find the services and products that they want. There is less respect for the past and organisations are competing for new and innovative ways of adding value to products and services to maintain and increase their user base. Education is changing to greater self-directed learning. Technology is creating opportunities that could not have been imagined before and entrepreneurship is a necessary skill in the nineties. All libraries must embrace new technologies, continuous improvement philosophies and have a capacity to change and redesign services to meet the needs of users. Greater accountability including measures of performance is a key element in systems management thinking and a planning culture is essential for delivering on customer expectations. Skills need to be continually updated to meet the challenges ahead. Demarcation lines are becoming blurred within library management structures and between libraries and information providers. Those organisations that look for opportunity, use creative energy and are able to move resources to high priority, high impact areas, will be successful.

What effects do you consider wholesale changes in service delivery philosophy and policy might have for the sector?

While libraries have generally been well-managed and have excellent service delivery philosophy, the sector will be under increasing pressure as a result of competition privatisation and contracting out. This will require that librarians have well honed management tools for achieving optimal efficiency and effectiveness. A high level of accountability will require that librarians use benchmarks and other performance measures to convince senior executives and decision makers that quality outcomes are being achieved without resource wastage. Pressure to reduce costs will mean that services will be provided on evidence of need and benefit to the community.

User-pays strategies will need to be openly debated in line with pressures to reduce costs. There will be greater acceptance of user-pays and subsidisation strategies and it will be important to articulate organisational values in this context as they relate to issues such as freedom of informa-

tion, equity, and cultural diversity. Good human resource management practices will be required as libraries need to find new ways of recognising and rewarding staff. Librarians will also need good networks and a high level of community support, the development of key alliances, strong market focus and effective communication strategies.

Key outcomes from the ACLIS/ALIA merger?

A strong and effective organisation providing leadership to the library and information industry in professional and organisational issues. The aims of the organisation will be clearly understood and the goals will be aligned to the needs of the industry. The organisation will be able to act quickly, form strategic alliances and operate within a collaborative and co-operative framework involving other key bodies including single sector industry bodies to enhance and extend services to its members. Its role will include effective advocacy to government, representing and raising the profile of the industry to the community, anticipating the needs of the profession into the next century and assisting members to operate effectively in a rapidly-changing environment.

Vision for the library and information sector?

Libraries will operate more effectively in an environment where the market is clearly understood and services will be aligned to the particular client needs of that community. Libraries will develop new roles taking advantage of opportunities to add significant value to the information environment using the skills of librarians to organise knowledge, package information and provide client centred services. Libraries will not only be a source of information content and access to the knowledge economy, they will promote cultural awareness, creative growth and personal fulfilment for an increasingly diverse and discerning user community. Opportunities for libraries to work co-operatively across all sectors will increase and strategic alliances will develop between these and other cultural institutions.



Curriculum vitae

Present position

University librarian, University of Melbourne

Previous positions

Associate librarian (reader services) University of Melbourne, from 1989-1991; chief librarian, Melbourne College of Advanced Education, from 1986-1989; deputy chief librarian, Melbourne State College, from 1983-1986. Other positions held since 1971 have included reader services, lending services, reference and cataloguing at a number of institutions, as well as a two year period as a school librarian.

Professional activities

Member, ACLIS National Council since 1994, and president since 1995. Membership of the Council of Australian University Librarians since 1991, and deputy president from 1995. An executive member of the Friends of Libraries, Australia since 1988. Other affiliations include a three year membership of the Australian Libraries of Colleges of Advanced Education, six years as a member of the ACLIS sub-committee of resources (1983-1989), as well as being a former president of the ALIA Universities and College Libraries section national and Victorian groups.

Statement of professional concerns

Although I have principally been involved in academic libraries throughout my career, I have maintained a particular interest in libraries in all sectors through my role on various committees and through informal networks and seminars. I believe that libraries and librarians in all sectors face many common issues, relating to the way in which new technologies are affecting information as well as the way services are managed. In all libraries there is a major focus on change management processes including quality management, staff development and training needs, collection management and service issues. Greater levels of collaboration within and between sectors are needed to maximise resources. It is essential that the reputation and esteem of libraries is enhanced through effective representation to government and key administrators. This can be achieved through one strong cross-sectoral organisation which is responsive, visible and able to represent the library industry as a whole.

As lifelong learning and self learning philosophies continue to thrive, libraries will be recognised as an essential element in the learning process.

To enable new strategic partnerships to develop the Association will need to support a climate of communication and common purpose across sectors. The Association will need to lead from the front identifying and developing programs which meet the current and future needs of the sector such as legal and regulatory issues, training needs, management issues and national resource sharing programs including document delivery and collection strategies.

UNION LIST OF PERIODICALS HELD IN PERTH METROPOLITAN LIBRARIES

The seventh edition of this list has just been published by the WA Group of the Public Libraries Section.

It is a comprehensive listing in title order and would be a useful indicator in relation to periodicals collection development in public libraries.

Cost is \$15, including postage and handling. Cheques payable to ALIA Public Libraries Section (WA).

Orders (with payment or request for invoice) to:

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