A new name?

Over the past six months there has been some discussion within the library and information sector about the name of the organisation formed from the ACLIS/ALIA merger. Some of the arguments for and against a name change are given below and the Leadership Committee hopes that this will serve as a springboard to further discussions. In considering this issue it is important to think not only of the implications of any prospective change for the library profession and the organisations in which we work but also for our dealings with the broader national and international professional and political community. This issue has important ramifications — both symbolically and directly. We should think of the impact for both the profession, and the broader community in either adopting a new name, or retaining the old name. We need your opinion. Please tell us whether you think a new name is needed (and what the new name should be), or if we should retain ALIA as the name. **TO VOICE AN OPINION, send an e-mail to name@alia.org.au**, or send a postcard to ALIA at PO Box E441 Kingston 2604.

The case for a new name

We are choosing a name for a new organisation a new name will be more inclusive, broadening the umbrella of the new organisation, than recycling an old name.

The new name sends a signal to our members, friends and the general community that we are

doing something new. Retaining the old name sends a different signal.

We will find a better name than the ones we have. The current names are cumbersome and conventional. Although they have come to acquire meaning and strong significance for us, this is because of their familiarity They don't have this familiarity or meaning for other people. Both organisations have very long names (five or six words, more than fifteen syllables) and the acronyms don't have clear meanings to people who are not in the club(s).

We want to change the way our brand is seen. A new name symbolises new content and new direction. A major reason we are combining is so that we can have more effective representation as a single organisation, changing the name will convey that change, but an unchanged name will not.

A new name will make it possible for everyone to be involved without resentment.

A name change is likely to be cost effective, given the benefits outlined above. There are many ways to achieve a name change in practice, and they have different price tags. We should choose a modestly-priced option which does the job.

Some of the names which have been suggested include: Libraries and Information Australia, Libraries Australia, Information Australia, Auslib, Ozlib, Libraries 21 Australia, and L2K.

The case in support of retaining the name ALIA

The Australian Library and Information Association was established in 1937 as the Australian Institute of Librarians. The name ALIA was adopted quite recently in 1988. Another name change could create confusion among members, creditors, politicians and bureaucrats — to name a few.

The name clearly identifies the focus of the organisation. It was settled

on after lengthy consideration. Any change of name would most likely involve re-arranging the words in the current name. The name ALIA is well recognised and relevant and accurately describes the group of people and institutions which the organisation serves — both now, and in the foreseeable future. It is not certain that a new name will prove more effective or inclusive. It could alienate parts of the existing ALIA membership and weaken their identity with their Association.

The acronym ALIA is no more cumbersome than most other national associations. Indeed it is more easily pronounced than many others and, used in context such as ALIAnet, has demonstrated its practical application.

A name change would entail a high cost in corporate communications. Over the last decade, ALIA has worked diligently to create a positive, and prominent profile for the library and information sector. ALIA is recognised by others in the information industry (nationally and internationally), as well as the media and government. The

cost of rebuilding this profile is difficult to estimate but would encompass advertising and promotion of the new name to all the parties mentioned above. The current program of advocacy and representation — recognised as one of ALIA's core strengths — would suffer and it would take some considerable time to build this up again.

There would be a direct cost in changing the building name, stationery, published material, ALIAnet, materials such as the *Lobby for libraries* video, and a myriad of other areas where ALIA is used. Post-nominals used by Fellows and professional members (librarians and library technicians) which are recognised by many employers, would change.

A change of name will attract additional costs which are very difficult to quantify or predict. A change of name, if accompanied by a change of objects and purposes and a transfer from the current Royal Charter to a company limited by guarantee, could threaten ALIA's income tax exempt status and may have other tax and stamp duty implications.

A new name will not deliver progress and innovation. ALIA is an effective name. Why change it?