

Actions speak louder than words

In the August edition of *inCite*, several Coalition MPs stressed the importance of libraries for all Australians, especially in providing a 'gateway' to information all over the world via the internet.

Unfortunately, the Howard Government's actions cannot be judged by these worthy sentiments: it slashed to a fifth of its original size a fund initiated by the previous government to provide internet access to every library in Australia, and then forced libraries into competition with community groups for this reduced pool. Libraries are the key to ensuring that the divide between information rich and poor is kept as narrow as possible. However, this role cannot be assumed in a financial vacuum.

The Democrats will shortly be announcing our position on the Coalition's tax policy. We are concerned about the implications of a GST on books, primarily that it could reduce access to culture.

Everywhere, local government, higher education and schools budgets are being savagely pruned, threatening the ability of libraries to remain relevant. The Democrats welcome the *Lobby for libraries* campaign and pledge to continue working in the Senate for better libraries.

Senator Lyn Allison,
Democrats spokesperson on Schools and Local Government

Language of inclusion

The 8th Asia-Pacific Specials, Health and Law 'Librarians' Conference is currently being promoted in *inCite* and elsewhere and I would like to draw members' attention to

the title of the conference.

In cases where both librarians and library technicians would be eligible to attend conferences and workshops, I would like to ask conference organisers, and ALIA as the professional body, if the more generic term 'libraries' could be used (as in: Specials, Health and Law 'Libraries' Conference).

Whilst I am assured that library technicians would be welcome at the Specials, Health and Law conference, because it is called a 'Librarians' conference, they may not feel they are eligible to attend, and may also be discouraged from seeking approval from their managers or organisations to attend.

Library technicians can be the sole operators in some smaller libraries, and throughout the profession there are many

technicians who have wide experience and skills, and would benefit from attending conferences and workshops specific to their work.

A more aware and inclusive language would help to raise the profile of library technicians within ALIA and the library profession and encourage our professional development.

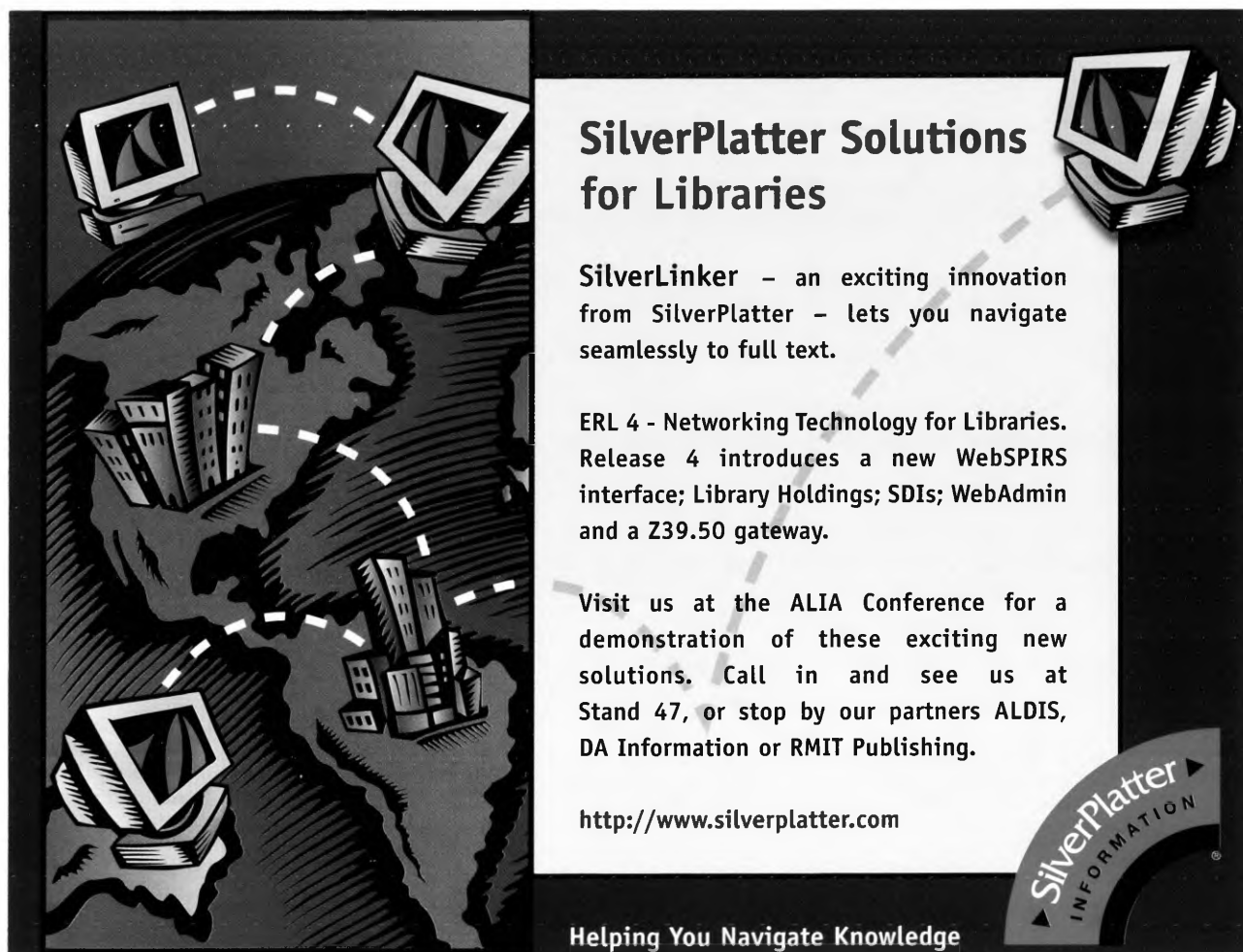
Lainey Furness (ALIA Tech),
Goonellabah NSW

Your voice

Your letters on any issue of relevance to the library and information sector are welcomed.

All letters should be addressed to the *inCite* editor and may be e-mailed to incite@alia.org.au, or faxed to 02 6282 2249, or posted to: Your voice, ALIA, PO Box E441, Kingston ACT 2604. Please include your name and postal address with your letter or e-mail.

Letters will be accepted for publication until the 18th of the month.



The advertisement features a stylized illustration of a globe with several computer monitors and buildings connected by dashed lines, symbolizing global connectivity. The text is presented in a clean, sans-serif font. The SilverPlatter logo is in the bottom right corner, and the tagline 'Helping You Navigate Knowledge' is at the bottom center.

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