

Your voice

ALIA membership should move to financial year

I would like to suggest that ALIA move from a calendar year to the financial year for membership fees, as the arrival of the renewal statement in December — just prior to Christmas — and a due date of the end of January is not conducive to encouraging payment of membership fees. A large number of people do not have the funds available at this time of the year and, while I highly regard my professional membership, not everyone will have it as the highest priority over the Christmas period.

Another suggestion is that ALIA investigate tangible benefits such as a ten per cent discount for members from a large bookshop chain — to help us who are members 'sell' the advantages of ALIA membership to current non-members.

Catherine Bright, Ryde

Another good reason to attend conference!

The March issue of *inCite* carried descriptions of the the Bob Hawke Prime Ministerial Library (University of South Australia) and the John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library (Curtin University of Technology).

Both developments are based on the long-established United States of America presidential library system, and in particular owe much to the Jimmy Carter Library in Atlanta.

The director of the Jimmy Carter Library, Don Schewe, will be a speaker at the ALIA Biennial Conference in Adelaide in October, sponsored by the Bob Hawke Prime Ministerial Library. His paper will be focusing on important issues to do with access to government documents in a democracy as well as the system of United States of America presidential libraries — another good reason to come to ALIA 98 in Adelaide!

Dr Alan Bundy, Underdale

Review of fees needed

Loyal ALIA members who reside overseas must pay affiliate fees, regardless of their salary levels.

Since I am an Associate, not in paid employment, this means I pay an extra \$57. That's an awful lot of sweet potato!

I must still pay airmail dues on all my journals (including *inCite*), if I am to get them within three months of publication.

My overseas location means that I am unable to attend professional development activities, ALIA meetings or activities.

Any chance of a review, please?

Helen Hobbs, Port Moresby

We must harness technology to preserve and enhance access

In the week that Australia's first Prime Ministerial Library — the John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library (JCPML) — opened its doors for business, I was delighted to receive my February issue of *inCite* and to read the ALIA president's comments about 're-igniting interest in local history'.

While I would support all of the president's comments, I believe that interest from the community is already high. I'm not so sure, however, that library and archives professionals are well prepared to design and deliver client-focussed services to satisfy the interest. What we need to be doing as a profession is harnessing [sic] information technology to enhance access and assist in preservation and designing innovative, interesting and inspiring programs and services for clients.

This is exactly the motivation for the establishment of the JCPML. This library adds a new dimension in professional practice and brings together a team of professionals with diverse backgrounds in education, archives, records management and librarianship. The JCPML advances scholarship, enhances cultural awareness and provides a gateway for the community to learn about its past. Visiting the JCPML in person or through the Internet provides an opportunity for all to learn from the past to build a better community.

Issues raised by the ALIA president are not simply the responsibility of those working in public libraries. As we approach

the centenary of federation let's take some proactive steps to develop collection actions plans to develop professional capabilities to improve access to and preservation of our cultural heritage.

Vicki Williamson, John Curtin Prime Ministerial Library

We must guard against complacency

It was pleasing to read John Shipp's strong and enthusiastic vision for ALIA in the January *inCite*.

However, I take issue with his glib Kennedy sign-off to the 'Frontline' column, telling members they should ask what they can do for ALIA rather than vice-versa.

I think it is imperative that ALIA National Office and the General Council asks itself regularly and searchingly, 'What else can we do for our members?'. When the day comes that nothing comes to mind after asking the question, it's an indication that we are heading for trouble. A strong and healthy Association is one that is responsive, intuitive and innovative.

As Shipp himself notes, a great deal of ALIA's vitality comes from grassroots members who give so freely of their own time to branch activities.

Working as an information consultant, I currently have five professional associations vying for my time and membership dollars. All are important to me, but let's be pragmatic. The key factor that is going to keep me a member of each is whether it fills the need that caused me to seek membership in the first place.

ALIA has a diverse membership and members do not all join for the same reasons. It cannot be all things to all people, but it must be ever-mindful that the individual response

is the best indicator of whether these needs are being met.

Perhaps, instead of Kennedy, we should share Bill Gates' use of Henry Ford for inspiration. It seems that Gates keeps a portrait of Ford in his office — not so much in admiration of Ford's creativity, but more as a lesson in Ford's complacency. Ford had the auto market sewn up, but complacency about his success resulted in his competitors stealing the market from under him.

Let's make sure ALIA drives lots of new-model, coloured cars — not simply standardised 'basic black' ones!

Jan Gaebler, Lower Mitcham

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.

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STUDY GRANT AWARD 1998

There are funds available to ALIA members wishing to undertake a study project. Study Grants are offered to provide an opportunity for librarians or library technicians to undertake projects that they would otherwise be unable to do because of the time and costs involved. Study Grants are open to practising librarian or library technician members who have been personal members for at least two years and have a minimum of three years experience.

The number of awards in any year will depend upon the funds available and the estimated costs of proposals received.

Nomination forms are available from ALIA National Office
PO Box E441, Kingston ACT 2604
ph 02 6285 1877, fax 02 682 2249
e-mail awards@alia.org.au
URL <http://www.alia.org.au/awards.html>

Applications close
1 September 1998

ALIA