

Board meeting the challenge...



**Jennefer
Nicholson**

Executive director
jennefer.nicholson@alia.org.au

The ALIA Board of Directors has endorsed ...

- *Guidelines for home library services and Guidelines for health libraries* — both will be available on ALIANet
- the merger of the Information Science section and NSW Specials section to form the Information Specialists division
- in principle, the TAFE Qld section 2001 TAFE conference bid

and confirmed...

- the 2001 Public Libraries conference, Melbourne, 12–14 November
- the 2003 Library Technicians conference, Brisbane, 10–12 September

and appointed...

- Ruth Quinn as the ALIA representative on the CAUL group on aid to East Timor university libraries, and
- invited all current committee representatives to serve until the 2001 AGM.

ALIA is one of the few library and information associations to include librarians, library technicians, institutions and those interested in the sector in its membership. This requires careful balancing of what can be diverse needs and interests.

The revitalisation program, begun with the Charter of Renewal and confirmed this year with incorporation under Corporations Law and the National Policy Congress (NPC), is now well underway by the Board. The Association's future lies with membership strength and industry credibility. Some things are easy to change, others require research and planning. An essential requirement is to shift our current administrative processes orientation to a services and policy orientation.

The Board recognises that the Association (and in some cases the sector) does not have satisfactory research and industry data resources. Over the next nine months the national office will be sourcing data and establishing an infrastructure so that the Association can access valid and factual data; monitor and document trends and changes over time; identify gaps in important information, statistic and research areas; adopt a credible policy focus developed by and for the sector; provide a reference resource; and advocate more effectively on behalf of members and the sector in general. The infrastructure will become an integral part of the Association's functions.

The Association must increase its membership. Our recruitment and retention rates need to be higher, a real challenge for bringing in those of the 'Next' generation where nothing lasts forever and loyalty does not count. At the November meeting the Board will develop an action plan for establishing exclusive services, benefits and advantages of membership for institutions; recruitment and supporting programs for students; and recruitment and retention strategies for individual members.

One of the issues coming out of the NPC was making it easier to join. The requirement for nomination of new members has been removed and the process of election to Associate and Technician membership simplified and sped up. Monthly direct debit payment will be introduced as an option for new members and if successful extended to all members at the next renewal period. The current membership category framework will be reviewed early in 2001 to see how it can be more inclusive and less complex.

In response to NPC recommendations the Board is planning to phase in a new group (division) structure by 30 June 2001 which aims to be flexible, responsive and easily formed. The application form, guidelines and officers bearers guide are being finalised for release in December. Endorsement and funding can be for any period up to two years. The criteria include the group's ability to fulfil the Objects of the Association and to

achieve its goals, the viability of the financial plan and commitment to accountability and reporting requirements. The Board proposes to consider applications twice a year, but will consider applications at any time if needed. With the assistance of a group from the NPC and our local presence officers the Board has been considering options for support arrangements for the new group structure. One option to be looked at more closely in November is a network of regional leaders to represent and promote the interests of ALIA and the profession.

Between now and February the Board will be exploring options for meeting the future technology, conference, publishing and training and development needs of the Association to support the Objects and benefit members. Our awards program and committee representation will be reviewed.

The Board agreed in principle to open discussions on closer co-operation with ASLA in consultation with ALIA School Libraries section presidents. Discussions are also being held with the RMAA.

The Board endorsed the ILL benchmarking study process being conducted by the National Resource Sharing Working Group to review ILL practices in Australia and agreed that ALIA be responsible for the distribution of the revised code being prepared by the NRSWG once it is endorsed by the industry.

Getting on the agenda

Getting a decision from the Board is not restricted to the meeting cycle. The Board is committed to considering matters between meetings if needed so that the business and activities of the Association are not unnecessarily delayed. Please contact me if you have any matters for the Board.

In addition to the regular business items and items referred to above other matters currently on the draft agenda for the meeting of 12–13 November include:

- draft 2001 budget;
- mechanisms to achieve Object 3;
- consideration of responses to the draft core values statement;
- draft statement on freedom of access to information;
- methodology proposal for institutional accreditation (Health section); and
- course recognition reports.

ALIA is not travelling alone. Associations including those in the library and information sector around the world are changing or re-inventing their organisation. The ALIA Board of Directors is utilising this great resource for ideas, comparison, and adaptation. Through our work with other associations it is clear that ALIA is well-advanced and has the courage and capability to revitalise. ■