

Working the 'net of networks



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Feedback to your Board of Directors

Do you have an idea, compliment or concern about *your* Association? Contact any director below on personal issues and ideas will be reviewed at each meeting of the Board.

E-mail to feedback@alia.org.au will be automatically forwarded to all Board members.

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In September 1927 in Edinburgh, Scotland the resolution was made to establish an international federation of library associations, to become known as IFLA. This year IFLA returns to Glasgow, in August, for its 75th anniversary. This year, like all others, there will be a strong contingent of Australian officers, delegates, speakers and trade exhibitors showcasing Australian librarianship.

One of the many strengths of ALIA's membership of IFLA is the international networking it supports. The Section on the Management of Library Associations (MLA) links us with representatives of associations from diverse cultures, and of varying wealth and capacity, although the issues being grappled with are shared by all.

The increasing accessibility of e-mail has expanded the library association's network. Until recently the MLA was Anglo-Euro-North American dominated. This was partly due to associations in these countries being able to afford to attend IFLA conferences and meetings. The ability of many more associations to now

communicate electronically has very much enriched the network, bringing different views, ideas, and solutions. MLA is in effect a microcosm for how IFLA, the organisation, is evolving. The last election for the governing body saw for the first time every continent being represented by the successful candidates, including Alex Byrne from Australia. In August 2003 Kay Raseroka, from Botswana, will become president — the first African to hold that office.

ALIA has a high profile in both face-to-face and electronic networking. It is held in high regard generally for its many achievements over its 65-year membership of IFLA. Most recently the review and renewal of our activities is being followed closely. While others are seeking our input on these matters we are also in turn able to draw on this extensive network to listen, learn and compare. With almost universal concern for attaining better salary outcomes the success of the recent New South Wales pay equity case is of great interest.

Through a MLA initiative ALIA has a twinning partnership with the Papua New Guinea Library and Information Association (PNGLIA). This is mostly done electronically. In November 2000 I had the opportunity to represent IFLA at the PNGLIA biennial conference and the partnership was strengthened by this face-to-face contact. At IFLA 2001 I 'twinning' with the

president Grace Hiris Birney and this year vice-president Paul Jagipa will attend — both attending as beneficiaries of IFLA DANIDA grants. We have also provided the Association with three of our replaced PCs for use by office bearers. This twinning relationship, possible because of electronic communication revives the face-to-face relationship the LAA had with librarianship in Papua New Guinea in the 1970s as it moved towards independence.

In recent months ALIA has been visited by representatives from associations in Sri Lanka, Taiwan and New Caledonia.

Over the last few years, and initially through contact at MLA, ALIA has developed a close relationship with the Library and Information Association of South Africa (LIASA). As a very new association emerging from the new South Africa we have been able to share information and offer models. In April this year I had the pleasure of being sponsored by the South African government to present a workshop on association management at the Standing Conference of Eastern, Central and Southern African Library and Information Associations in Johannesburg. Fourteen associations were represented and it was a terrific experience for us all in building alliances — only partly overshadowed by the awe-inspiring fact I found out later that the room we were doing the workshop in, the Negotiating Council Chamber, was the venue for the negotiations between the ANC and the then government in the establishment of the new South Africa.

IFLA in Glasgow will bring together a number of networking strands. The open session program for MLA will include as presenters Charles Batambuze, a participant in the SCECSAL workshop from the Uganda Library Association, Bernard Dione from the Senegal Library Association who has been an active e-list participant, and Natalie Blanchard, an ALIA member, all young and speaking on provocative thoughts of the new generation and challenges for associations. Joyce Kirk and I will be meeting with many colleagues, including Madeleine Lefebvre the incoming president-elect for the Canadian Library Association and an ALIA member.

ALIA networks extend beyond the library and information sector. We are in the association business and so work closely with other professional and industry associations. It is intriguing how association managers can finish each other's sentences! Other Australian and overseas associations are an invaluable resource for models and advice. AUSA, the associations association provides a range of networking opportunities and professional development. Joyce Kirk was the keynote speaker at their recent conference. The program for the ALIA 2002 biennial conference is another example of networking beyond our own sector.

The rules and the modes of networking are changing to our benefit. ■