

Report of the 2002 National Policy Congress

A new, two-stage model was used for ALIA's National Policy Congress (NPC) this year. The first stage involved regional meetings being held across Australia during late September and early October. The second stage of the NPC was held on 1–2 November 2002 at ALIA House, in Canberra. Delegates at the Congress included eight State/Territory representatives from the regional NPC meetings, representatives of ALIA issue-based groups with interests relevant to the NPC agenda, and representatives of external peak bodies. All members of the ALIA Board of Directors attended the Congress, along with key National Office staff.

The Congress was held in two parts, ALIA delegates attending the first session on 1 November. Christine Mackenzie, ALIA vice-president, opened the afternoon's proceedings by welcoming delegates to the Congress. Following this Jennefer Nicholson, ALIA executive director,

presented an information session that focussed on internal ALIA business. In this session delegates were given an outline of the capabilities of ALIA's new web-based membership database (currently in development).

The discussion moved to the new ALIA Excellence Awards. Two possible models for the Award have been proposed: the first model is two-tiered, with the awards being presented at a state/territory and national level. In the second model the award would be available as a national award only. The key to the viability of the awards is sponsorship. With this in mind delegates indicated that they would prefer to see the award kept as a national award, however the Congress wanted the State/Territory wide groups to be consulted in the matter. Jennefer then led discussion on the current status of the 'umbrella' conference model for 2005.

Georgina Dale, manager, professional development and groups liaison, ran an informal groups house-keeping session to conclude the afternoon. This session provided delegates with the opportunity to discuss with ALIA Board members and National Office staff the various issues facing groups and to ask questions relevant to group administration. Issues covered included the financial administration of groups, communication, co-ordination, and obstacles to groups success.

Representatives from external peak bodies joined ALIA delegates for the Saturday session which concentrated on 'big picture' issues. After welcoming delegates, Joyce Kirk, ALIA's president, moved to discussion of the information agenda, an issue first addressed by the sector at the ALIA 2002 conference. Discussion focussed on what the information agenda could be and the role that ALIA could play in the agenda.

Delegates regarded ALIA's role in the agenda as taking the form of:

- lobbying,
- co-ordinating, and
- linking the agendas of various groups in the Library and Information Sector back to an umbrella ALIA agenda.

Delegates highlighted the following strengths that would enable ALIA to fulfil this role:

- national organisation,
- cross sectoral,
- branded, and
- a reputable name.

The session concluded with an analogy, based on the video *Libraries 2040* that had been shown at the beginning of the session, of ALIA forming the central core and co-ordinating other groups around the core.

Christine Mackenzie, assisted by Marie Murphy, manager policy, projects and research, presented the second session of the day, which addressed the Library and Information Services Education for the Knowledge Age (LISEKA) project. The session started with an overview of the LISEKA project outlining Stage 1 and went on to bring delegates up to date with progress made on Stage 2 of the project. Delegates were introduced to the educational framework and the interdependence of each element — core capabilities, workplace requirements and CPD — within the framework explained. The importance of finalising the draft statement *The library and information sector: core knowledge, skills and attitudes* in the context of LISEKA was noted. Delegates were asked to offer comments on both the Educational framework and the draft statement.

Susan Magnay, manager, planning policy, chaired the final session of the day which considered the ALIA draft plan (*ALIA: making the difference*) for 2003 and 2004. Discussion focussed on the proposed key initiatives, outcomes, performance measures and priorities for the plan. The feedback from this session will be incorporated into a revised draft plan to be distributed to ALIA members in December 2002 for their comments.

The day concluded with Joyce Kirk thanking delegates for their participation in the Congress. Delegates were asked for their thoughts on the success, or otherwise, of the new model for the NPC. Their feedback indicated that the model was sound and that only a few minor adjustments would be needed for future NPCs. ■

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