



powering our future

contribute to the information agenda → **ALIA 2002**

Issues Forum forges ahead

Spurred on by cult-of-commentator sour grapes reactions to the great news about the New South Wales pay equity test case, the ALIA 2002 conference issues forum e-list positively crackles and hums.

It was a great win for all of us, and to have it belittled by those with little to contribute has prompted many to comment on where the value lies. Here's a swift selection:

'In the end, the demonstration of our work through the site inspections which received very favourable comment in the decision, the evidence of working librarians, library technicians and archivists, the evidence on professional standards and training from ALIA and the comparisons to similarly qualified groups within the sector were what won the day...'

'Of more concern though is the issue of what we are

and do and how we as a profession are viewed by the community... I take the view, and actively promote this within my small sphere of influence, that as a librarian, I am an agent of change, a creator of opportunities and a source of information.'

'I feel like I have spent the past twelve years on a personal crusade to educate the average person on the merits and value of the skills of the profession. I have been running public and internal workshops and seminars on web and database searching for the past five years and know that eighty-five per cent of the population are absolutely clueless when it comes to constructing a search strategy. I find that running these sessions for staff, students and the finance sector industry in general has been a great way of providing an overall exposure of the inherent value of librarians — in fact it's the most effective PR exercise going and completely changes the perception of librarians being cardigan wearing, shushing, bookstamper!'

'I think that whilst some of our strengths are our commitment to service and our technical expertise, our greatest weakness is our ability to market ourselves. I believe that ultimately we are going to

have to commit some serious dough towards perhaps TV campaigns (seeing that so many people watch the idiot box these days), to show people who are not already aware, what our services involve. Most of the library marketing I've seen over the years has focused at people who are already library users. We need to reach the wider community, and I think the best way is via TV, radio and the major dailies.'

Weigh in with these and other issues. Join us at <http://www.alia.org.au/conferences/alia2002/issues.html>. Remember: you can be an e-delegate whether you are coming to the conference or not.

Last month's quote? 'A library is thought in cold storage' — Lord Samuel, British Liberal politician, 1870–1953. A book of quotations (1947) p10.

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