

# Promotion and marketing

Let's keep up the good work



**Christine Mackenzie**

ALIA president  
christine.mackenzie@alia.org.au

Warm congratulations to Alex Byrne on his election as president elect of IFLA — a great honour for him and for us. And also congratulations to Jennefer Nicholson, who has been voted on to the first IFLA Standing Committee of the Management of Library Associations Section. Such international recognition is a fine thing.

There are a lot of stories in this month's *inCite* about the celebration of Australian Library and Information Week. It got me thinking back to efforts to promote libraries over the years, and our instinctive sense that if only people knew what we had and what we offered we would get more usage and more support. My memories only go back to the early 80s and I am sure there are a few of you out there who can go back further than that. What I remember most from those days was Colin Watson's passionate support for library promotion and the Australian Library Promotion Council. Colin was the regional librarian at Dandenong Valley Regional Library Service for more than twenty years, and he worked really hard marketing public libraries. Another fond memory I have is of the Victorian Library Expos of the late 1980s and early 1990s, which were held in the City Square and involved a lot of very committed and enthusiastic public librarians, led in style by Sue Noble. And who can forget the pointy breasted librarian of the mid-1990s who created such controversy, either loved or hated by her colleagues! More recently South Australian public libraries have been at the fore, promoting the value of libraries to their communities. ALIA assumed responsibility for Australian Library and Information Week in 1990 and has done a great job of ensuring the continuation of this important event in our calendar. It's great to read about all the activities that libraries have engaged in to spread the word.

Aligned to Library and Information Week is the promotion of reading. There is a very nice revolution taking place out there and its about a resurgent interest in reading and books and an acknowledgment that encouraging a love of reading is a prime role of public and school libraries. The national simultaneous storytime [see p6 of this issue for details] is a great event that can provide easy media attention and terrific political support. Smart libraries ask their local member or local councillor to read the story at their local or school library. Happy politicians, happy local paper, happy children and happy libraries!

The UK now has the Reading Agency (<http://www.readingagency.org.uk>), a new

strategic partnership funded by CILIP (Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals, the old Library Association), the Arts Council and SE Arts. It works closely with libraries and in particular the Society of Chief Librarians. The Reading Agency co-ordinates the national summer reading program in the United Kingdom and is building on that to take on much more national work. It is making a huge impact and its clear that the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport and the Secretary of State for Education and Skills see it making an important contribution to the government agenda on reading. Another initiative in the United Kingdom is The World Book Day Online Festival (<http://www.worldbookdayfestival.com>). This brought together key partners — World Book Day; Resource: the Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries; CILIP; and the above mentioned Reading Agency, to create and deliver the first online national reading festival through the public libraries network in the United Kingdom. The first ever World Book Day was held in March this year, and involved a host of leading writers including Nigella Lawson, Terry Pratchett, Meera Syal and Michael Rosen. The festival showcased world class authors giving interviews, talks, readings and chat sessions throughout the day.

It would seem like a good idea for Australian libraries to get more involved in the Books Alive campaign. Like the United Kingdom program, this has been developed by a reference group comprising representatives of booksellers, publishers, libraries, government, authors, schools and literacy advocates and is co-ordinated by the Australia Council, the Federal Government's arts funding and advisory body. The overriding objective of the Books Alive campaign is to promote the intrinsic value of books, reading and literacy (particularly for children) and the books of Australian writers. (<http://www.ozco.gov.au/issues/booksalive/about.html>) In the April edition of *inCite* there was a report of Senator Rod Kemp launching Books Alive 2003. It is the biggest co-operative promotion of books and reading ever undertaken in Australia. The promotion will run from 2–15 August and will enable readers to buy a book by six high profile Australian writers for just \$5 each (with the purchase of any other book.) At the very least public and school libraries should be aware of the titles and perhaps engage in some kind of cross promotion with local bookshops.

Promotion and marketing are key strategies to ensure ongoing support for libraries — let's keep up the good work. ■

*There is a very nice revolution taking place out there and its about a resurgent interest in reading and books...*