

► free to adopt policies that support the diversity of cultural expression and the viability of all those that produce and disseminate this expression' [Draft submission of the Australian Coalition for Cultural Diversity to the US FTA Task Force, Office of Trade Negotiations, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade]. International trade agreements must not constrain the right of each nation to sustain and develop its own cultures. The organisations that are parties to ACCD represent the professional associations in the cultural sector and include among others Arts Law Centre, Ausdance, Australian Publishers Association, Australian Society of Authors, Copyright Agency Ltd., Music Council of Australia, CREATE Australia and the Screen Producers Association of Australia. For ALIA, membership of the Coalition provides an opportunity to influence government policy and to shape the legislative environments in which institutions offer library and information services.

Although December-January is high summer in Australia the pace of activity for ALIA has not slowed. If the ALIA gatherings and partnerships that I have mentioned are any indication then 2003 looks like being an action packed year with the prospect of new partnerships emerging from shared interests and concerns. I hope that as a member of ALIA, you too have a rewarding year with the prospect of developing initiatives and programs for the people who rely on the services you offer and the value that you add to your workplaces. ■

Your voice

Unassailable ALIA...

Now that the NSW Pay Equity award claim is complete I would like to record a very big thanks to Phil Teece, Marie Murphy and ALIA for the support and expertise they gave us in our case. Travelling into the unknown as we were, it was the key issues of professionalism and the standards and principles that go with being part of a profession that became key evidence in the proceedings. ALIA as our professional body proved to be unassailable against opposition from the employers and within the union leadership as the arbiter of standards and qualifications.

What will be crucial over the next period will be what flow-ons can be achieved in other sectors and how employers will try to wind back what we have won. I say this knowing that at the time of writing there is a clear push to 'punish' the organisations (that is, the library staff) covered by this award (except for the State Library of New South Wales) by forcing them to find the money for the new rates without additional funding from NSW Treasury. Perhaps it could be found from the savings made by paying us less for all these years! To some of my colleagues who have said that jobs will be lost as a result of the win I ask why is it

library workers have to accept second best — it's what I call the 'Mother has the burnt chop syndrome'.

For me, proof we were right has been the librarians and library technicians who have contacted me and the rest of the team to say that for the first time their take home pay is enough to live on, pay off debts and makes them feel recognised as making a valued contribution in the workplace — and that's what this case has been all about.

From here on in we should all be working towards a fair and equitable career path and pay structure across all sectors and to develop our own abilities to articulate our work and our value so that our contribution speaks for itself.

After six years and mountains of real and cyber documents it's been quite a ride!

Kate Burnham
(Chair now resigned) PSA
Library Industry Working Party

Your letters on any issue of relevance to the library and information sector are welcomed.

All letters should be addressed to the incite editor and may be e-mailed to incite@alia.org.au, or faxed to 02 6282 2249, or posted to: Your voice, ALIA, PO Box E441, Kingston 2604. Please include your name and postal address with your letter or e-mail.

Letters will be accepted for publication until the 18th of the month.



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