

Access to information more costly under Free Trade



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The announcement of the finalisation of the Free Trade Agreement between Australia and the US on 8 February 2004 has been accompanied by the expected wide media coverage and commentary. In *The Age* article on 11 February by Fergus Shiel Colette Ormonde, ALIA's Copyright and Intellectual Property adviser, and Dr Matthew Rimmer from our Copyright and Intellectual Property Advisory Group give a good representation of the impact on library and information services and their users of the copyright and intellectual property content in the agreement. This has led to a number of other me-

dia contacts. At the time of writing not all the detail is available, but what is, is disheartening for users of copyright information. It also may explain the delay in the release of the review of the *Digital Agenda Act*. I commend Colette's article in this issue (page 6) to you for an initial comment on the agreement and her article in the December 2003 issue for further detail on the agreement.

The process for the agreement still has a way to go before it is in place. There is likely to be extensive parliamentary debate and review of the agreement over coming months, through the Treaties Joint Committee and probably a Senate Inquiry. The latter in particular will open the agreement up for public input. Our lobbying will continue in what has the potential for an interesting election year. <http://alia.org.au/advocacy/> provides background, links, and ALIA submissions and articles.

ALIA elections

There is a good competitive field for vice-president (president-elect) and the three director positions this year. Current Board members have commented that they are encouraged by this and hope it reflects a growing interest by members in participating in the Association at this level and experiencing the professional development that taking on the responsibilities of a director or vice-president (president-elect) offers. Interestingly, several of the candidates have had their interest sparked through National Policy Congress representation or working with the Board on one of its advisory committees or as a representative on a committee. These roles have been expanded in our new structure and it is evident that the Association is benefiting from the participation of members in these ways.

So vote early and if you are lucky enough to be any combination of personal member, institutional representative or National Policy Congress delegate, you will get to vote often — at least twice.

Please contact me if you did not receive your ballot papers with this issue. Where there is more than one member residing at the same (*inCite*) address, additional ballot papers will be forwarded.

Enough Rope

I hear that Andrew Denton's ABC TV show 'Enough Rope' is planning to interview three librarians in the jobs segment in the new series. Ratings will no doubt be up as we watch to see when it goes to air and who gets the gig. ■

Invitation to host the ALIA 2006 biennial conference

The Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) calls for expressions of interest from its members in hosting the ALIA 2006 Biennial conference.

The aims of ALIA conferences are to:

- provide continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities;
- promote excellence in practice;
- extend the knowledge of registrants;
- provide networking opportunities, especially for isolated and rural libraries;
- promote research in the sector;
- adopt innovative use of technologies to encourage wide delegate participation in the program;
- promote the sector to the wider community;
- strengthen partnerships with related organisations;
- build relationships with sector trade suppliers through their participation, including sponsorship, product reviews and exhibitions;
- generate a surplus for the Association.

Interested members or groups are encouraged to seek advice from the executive director and previous conference committees to assist in preparing their submission. Please contact Catherine Carter at ALIA National Office (02 6215 8235 or catherine.carter@alia.org.au) for a copy of the tender specifications. Sarah can also provide information about previous ALIA conferences and conference guidelines.

Committee members can be drawn from more than one locality or region. The event may be held at a venue in a locality other than that of the committee. For example the ALIA 2004 biennial committee comprises members from the South-east Queensland region. City and regional tourism bureaus usually provide assistance in the preparation of bids for conferences in their locality.

In submitting an expression of interest please address the points in the tender specifications and provide as much information as possible. Send the submission to the executive director, ALIA National Office for the Board of Directors' consideration. *Expressions of interest should be signed by the authorised representative of the tendering committee.*

The Board of Directors will review the expressions of interest received and the executive director will advise the tendering committee of the Board's decision. The Board will generally require firmer details on a professional conference organiser and budget to be provided by a later date.