

Issues for ALIA 2005



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For the past three years the National Library of Australia has convened meetings of representatives of Australia's peak library organisations to identify the significant issues facing the library sector, and to consider how to address these issues at a national level. As president of the Association, I accompanied the executive director to the meeting held in December 2004 and found it an interesting experience both for the issues raised and as an opportunity to learn more about the organisations represented at the meeting. It was impressive to recognise the variety of library organisations that met so productively to consider such a wide range of issues of concern to the library and information services sector. Represented organisations included health, schools, TAFE, public, law, parliamentary, government, higher education, state and national libraries. Library educators were also represented as well as ALIA.

From the discussions there were a number of issues that were referred to ALIA for action in 2005.

Government publications

The closure of government bookshops has raised concern about access to government publications. There is high demand for government information, but it is not always easily available. ALIA will host a Round Table this year to facilitate discussion of this issue and identify ways to raise awareness with government.

Libraries in the online environment

The recommendations of the Senate Report *Libraries in the online environment* are strongly supported by the peak body representatives. The recommendations provide a valuable summary of the key issues of importance to the whole library sector. Lobbying by organisations, including ALIA, is required to encourage a timely response to the report by the Federal Government.

National site-licensing

A site-licensing forum was held before the Peak Bodies meeting. The Forum recognised that library sectors have differing needs and therefore a range of strategies are needed in this area. ALIA will continue to lobby for recognition of the needs of libraries and their users in the *National Broadband Strategy* and will also work to raise awareness of the wide range of electronic resources that are already available.

Australia-United States Free Trade Agreement: implications for libraries

One major implication is the extension of copyright from fifty to seventy years. The Australian Libraries Copyright Committee is to consider a strategy for educating library staff on the practical implications of the Agreement. ALIA will use its website to provide links to all relevant information.

Public Libraries Australia (PLA)

PLA was represented at the Peak Bodies meeting and ALIA has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with PLA. Work is continuing on defining advocacy and representative roles for the public library sector.

Education for librarianship

This issue generated a great deal of discussion as the trend has been for library schools to be downgraded or closed and academic positions not filled. ALIA is convening a forum in 2005 for educators and employers to discuss ways to ensure that professional library education courses continue to exist to serve the needs of employers.

ASLA-ALIA *Standards of professional excellence for teacher-librarians*

The Australian School Library Association (ASLA) and ALIA have endorsed a statement of national standards of professional excellence for teacher-librarians to help improve their professional practice by identifying the distinctive knowledge, skills and commitment of excellent teacher-librarians. The statement will be one of the discussion items for the next Peak Bodies meeting in 2005.

I also attended the 2nd ALIA New Librarians' Symposium (NLS) in Adelaide in December and was really impressed by the energy levels of the more than 250 delegates, and the professional management demonstrated by the conference organising committee so ably led by Kate Sinclair. The speakers were engaging and practical and, unlike some conferences, there were lots of questions from the delegates at the conclusion of the papers. Although NLS is a relatively new conference for ALIA, it is already gaining a reputation as a 'must attend' conference for librarians in the first ten years of their careers. Planning is already underway for the next NLS to be held in Sydney in 2006.

ALIA's Information Online 2005 conference was again a major event with nearly 1000 delegates and a trade exhibition with more than 120 exhibition booths. The very experienced Information Online Group's conference committee was led by Kay Harris with a varied conference program to meet the information needs of all the delegates attending. Special emphasis was placed on networking with other delegates and with our partners in the trade exhibition. At the conference dinner I was honoured to present an ALIA Fellowship to Marianne Broadbent and the Redmond Barry Award to John Dwight. Both these awards are peer-nominated and conferred by the ALIA Board of Directors. ■

Feedback to your Board of Directors

Do you have an idea, compliment or concern about your Association? Contact any director and ideas will be reviewed at each Board meeting.

E-mail to feedback@alia.org.au will be automatically forwarded to all Board members.

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