

Comes a time...



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In a recent speech in Canberra on global events and changing axes of influence and power, Lord Chris Patten, former diplomat and now Chancellor of Oxford and Newcastle Universities, made a cogent point about the difference between objecting to values and objecting to policies. In many instances of differences of views he suggests it is not values but policies that are being objected to, and these can usually be dealt with reasonably. If it is values that are being objected to, then, he suggests, there really is a problem.

The library and information sector is founded on the value of equity in access to information and freedom of expression. These are universal values in librarianship. The value of freedom of expression has rarely been under serious challenge in Australia, and our efforts have mainly been in supporting colleagues in other countries. The *Anti-terrorism (No.2) Bill* recently introduced into federal parliament, and in particular the proposed sedition offences, tests that value of freedom of expression. The implications of such sedition offences becoming legislation, and therefore policy, are huge and place unacceptable restraints on Australia's arts and creative industries.

The Association is a signatory to the submission by representatives of the Arts and Creative industries in Australia to the Senate Legal and Constitutional Legislation Committee on the proposed sedition offences in the *Anti-Terrorism (No.2) Bill 2005* (<http://ozsedition.blogspot.com/>). The submission states that the sedition offences are unnecessary, stifle legitimate dissent, are too broad and are unfair. Our support stated 'The Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) is the national professional organisation for the Australian library and information services sector and represents 5000 individual members, 1000 institutional members and the interests of 10.7 million library users. ALIA's first Object is "to promote

the free flow of information and ideas in the interest of all Australians and a thriving culture, economy and democracy". It opposes the proposed sedition offences in the *Anti-Terrorism (No.2) Bill 2005* (Schedule 7) and fully supports this submission.'

From our reading of the bill at this stage we do not think that ALIA's privacy guidelines and relevant policies need amending. The progress of the legislation is being monitored and further action will be taken if necessary.

Well, just as Neil Young sings in his song *Comes a Time*, 'there comes a time' for me to move on from ALIA to a new and exciting phase of my life. As Neil Young also sings in that song 'this old world keeps spinning round', so does ALIA. It has been a terrific journey for me and it is a good feeling to be leaving when ALIA is well positioned into the 21st century, and recognised locally and internationally by other organisations as innovative and a leader. ALIA's achievements — and there are many — have come about through the commitment of its members, partners and staff.

My time at ALIA has provided me with a great opportunity to get to know a wide range of stimulating people who have brought energy, expertise, ideas and strategic thinking to our work together. I have been supported as executive director by my National Office colleagues, who, through their professionalism and commitment, give far more to the organisation than is expected of their jobs. They achieve a huge amount and too often this goes unnoticed or is not acknowledged as it should be. Thank you all.

Though I am leaving the organisation I will be taking with me many friendships built through the job, and many positive thoughts and memories. January 1, 2006 brings a new year and a new phase of my life. My best wishes to you all for the new year and the future. ■

The Board farewells Jennefer as executive director

In her article, Kay Poustie has provided insights into Jennefer Nicholson's career with the Association. The Board wishes to pay tribute to the immense contribution Jennefer has made as executive director to lead and manage the Association in its transition from chartered association to a company structure. Jennefer has successfully introduced the systems and processes that support sound governance and transparent reporting mechanisms.

Jennefer is acknowledged for the role

she has played in working with the current and past Boards of Directors to develop the ALIA 'Towards 2010' strategic planning framework, which she has been instrumental in keeping alive and focussed through the two year operational plans. Jennefer leaves the Association very well structured to move forward into the next phase of its development. The Board extends its sincere thanks to Jennefer for her commitment and dedication to Association matters over the past 15 years. ■

Donations for library projects in Aceh

In the new year ALIA will announce an agreement with Australian People for Health, Education and Development Abroad (APHEDA) which will allow members to make donations to specific programs in Aceh. ■