

Getting to know you



Dagmar Schmidmaier AM

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Dear members and friends
Over the past few weeks I have had the pleasure of meeting many of you in the more remote parts of Australia. In early June I attended the Queensland Public Libraries Association 2006 conference at the Cairns Convention Centre. It was a lively and interesting program, engaging participants with current issues. Relevant and up-to-date services to the community were emphasised, as were strategies to promote and gain recognition for the innovative services public libraries provide. For me it highlighted the need for public library managers to allocate resources to an ongoing promotion strategy alongside provision of service.

During the last week in June I renewed friendships with Top End librarians as well as making many new contacts in Darwin. The Darwin professional library scene is certainly active and I had a great few days meeting staff, visiting nine libraries and participating in two very lively discussion sessions. I was very encouraged by the strong support for

ALIA that was expressed by members during these discussions; for the President and the Board to provide leadership to reposition the Association for the 21st century. As a result of these sessions I have agreed that the Board will issue a discussion paper for comment by the end of the year.

These exciting professional discussions were happening while the rest of Darwin, and thousands of visitors (and a few librarians) were gearing up for the V8 races and fireworks which are an annual highlight of the dry season.

As you know, the ALIA Board and the President are elected, voluntary positions. So that you can get to know other Board members, I have suggested to my colleagues that from time to time one of them should share Frontline.

I hope that many of you will participate in the regional/local meetings scheduled over the next couple of months to provide feedback on ALIA's strategic plan for the next year. ■

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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Forging a shared future

Public Libraries Australia (PLA) and the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) recently announced they are exploring collaborative opportunities and the potential for a future partnership. A meeting in May between representatives of both organisations resulted in a number of positive outcomes, including agreement that PLA and ALIA jointly fund a PLA executive officer position to focus on representation of the public library sector for both organisations. In addition, a joint PLA and ALIA membership model will be developed.

PLA has reached a critical stage of development since its inception in 2000. The organisation has achieved engagement with its membership base, partners in the public library sector, and other influential stakeholders. In its current form as a voluntary organisation, PLA is struggling to meet the operational and project-based demands that are required for the development of a strong and vibrant organisation.

The proposal for a partnership with ALIA will ensure that the strengths of both organisations are combined to provide a strategic focus for advocacy, support and services for public libraries. Joint projects already underway include:

- Baby boomers research project
- Books Alive 2006

- National Read Aloud Summit 2006
- @ your library 2006

I have been contracted to provide project support over the next six months. During this time I will work with both organisations to identify key areas for collaboration and issues for consideration in a future partnership, design strategies for consulting and communicating with members of both organisations, and develop a position description and recruitment strategy for the proposed PLA executive officer. I will be working closely with both PLA and ALIA officers on these matters, and am keen to hear from members of both organisations regarding collaboration and the potential of a shared future. Please contact me by e-mail: niki.kallenberger@alia.org.au.

The Boards of both PLA and ALIA are committed to supporting the development of this exciting partnership and will each have further discussion at upcoming Board meetings. Regular progress reports will appear in *inCite*, as well as in other appropriate communication channels of both organisations. We also anticipate using ALIA CLICK06 as an opportunity to talk further with ALIA and PLA members. Stay tuned as we forge a shared future!

Niki Kallenberger, PLA/ALIA project officer