



Roxanne Missingham

ALIA President

Feedback to your Board of Directors

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

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

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It is a great privilege to write my first column as ALIA President. I'd like to start by thanking Dagmar Schmidmaier for her outstanding contribution as ALIA President over the past year. It was a very significant year for the Association – among other projects, we put our financial management on a sounder footing with a new investment strategy which will provide a much more sustainable model for the future. Education and workforce planning also emerged as strong themes; at the Peak Bodies meeting held in May ALIA announced a planning program beginning with the production of a draft discussion paper for the whole profession and leading to a Forum on Education in 2008. Dagmar led these initiatives, which are critical for ALIA and for the profession.

We farewell two Board members with the commencement of the 2008 ALIA Board – Rachael Browning and Ann Ritchie. Both Rachael and Ann brought a terrific range of experiences and perspectives to the Board. Their interests in library service development, management and CPD enabled them to make a remarkable contribution to all the work of the Board. Many thanks, Rachael and Ann, for your contribution over the past two years.

ALIA is a very important organisation. We have a varied and strong membership – currently there are 4 569 individual members and 907 institutional members. ALIA has local liaison officers in all states and territories, as well as the National Office, providing services and products to you. Importantly, ALIA's benefits to members come from members. You organise a fabulous array of events, locally and nationally; work on important issues, such as copyright; and contribute to knowledge development through our professional publications and events. It is you members who are at the heart of all ALIA's successes and I'd like to congratulate everyone who is helping their professional colleagues – in particular those working on the National Library and Information Technicians Conference which will be held in Melbourne, 9–12 October (<http://www.alia07.com/>) and the Public Libraries Conference, 5–7 August, in Adelaide (<http://www.pla.org.au/Conferences.htm>).

Our goals for 2007/08 include building a stronger organisation which can deliver services, particularly advocacy, to benefit Australian library users and Australian libraries. Our plan, developed in consultation through the National Advisory Congress meetings last year focuses on:

- Promoting the free flow of information and ideas through open access to recorded knowledge, information, and creative works
- Connection of people to ideas
- Commitment to literacy, information literacy and learning
- Respect for the diversity and individuality of all people
- Preservation of the human record

- Excellence in professional service to our communities
- Partnerships to advance these values.

Specifically we plan to develop our advocacy program, recognising that it is a federal election year and that issues of online content regulation and filtering, copyright, and funding for library services remain critical to our sector and our users. Membership growth, achieving a new direction on education for the profession and continuing to build our partnerships with other organisations such as Public Libraries Australia, Australian School Library Association, Australian Society of Archivists and Records Management Association of Australasia are important means that we will use to achieve our goals. We have also begun a review of committees and representatives – and would be delighted to review your comments.

In the past month I have attended a number of meetings – the most significant by far was the National Licensing Forum held at the NLA. You may recall that in October 2003 the Senate Environment, Communications, Information Technology and the Arts References Committee report on their Inquiry into the Role of Libraries in the Online Environment recommended that funding be provided for a set of key databases for all Australians. While the report did not result in funding for such an approach the issue of a national co-operative purchasing scheme has been the subject of very considerable discussion and work over the past four years.

After extensive discussion with all library sectors on models, funding, processes, governance and purpose, a tender was conducted to identify products for purchase by Australian libraries on an opt-in model. Six products were selected and announced at the Forum. Julie Rae's article in this issue of *inCite* contains information on the selected products and operation of the consortia, Electronic Resources Australia (ERA) (<http://era.nla.gov.au/>). Jan Fullerton called the agreement a major breakthrough in the national delivery of library services to all, a critical step for an informed nation. And she was right!

For all libraries to work together to develop a suite of products is a huge step forward. The next challenge is to encourage libraries to express interest in the products to enable pricing for 2007/08 subscriptions to be obtained. Congratulations to all involved, particularly Julie Rae, chair of the Reference Group and Erica Ryan, the support officer in the National Library.

To finish off: I look forward to meeting many of you this year – a year in which we celebrate our 70th anniversary as an organisation, and the contribution made by libraries to the Australian community. Please don't hesitate to contact me with your thoughts about ALIA.