



Your mission, should you choose to accept it...

As a profession there is almost certainly one thing that unites us all – we are all readers, we read everyday – for work, for pleasure and to support our daily lives. But what if we couldn't?

The Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2006 Adult Literacy and Lifeskills Survey into the literacy levels of Australians highlighted an astounding situation – that 46% of the Australian adult population struggles without the literacy skills to meet the most basic demands of everyday life and work. Almost half of us who can't read newspapers, follow a recipe, make sense of timetables, or understand the instructions on a medicine bottle.

What is the future for our nation if its citizens don't possess the basic literacy skills to effectively participate in society? What are the social consequences for those who cannot gain employment or participate in our democratic society? What of the economic consequences where lack of literacy skills inhibits staff learning and development or even the basics of understanding health and safety instructions?

What is the future for libraries if a large proportion of our nation lacks the basic skills to access and use our services?

ALIA is a Founding Partner of the National Year of Reading 2012 – a year in which we hope to turn the nation's attention to this embarrassing statistic, celebrate the joy of reading and reignite our collective interests in reading. The Founding Partners also include the various public library associations and State Libraries across Australia.

ALIA and the other NYR2012 Founding Partners are lobbying government, talking to philanthropic organisations and forming partnerships with publishers, booksellers,

employers, media organisations, businesses, writers and others to make National Year of Reading 2012 a year to remember.

You'll find details of our first NYR2012 program, a writing competition called *Its never too late...to learn to read*, on page 25. This event is linked to Adult Learners Week 2011 - during which NYR2012 will be officially launched. We will be keeping you up to date with more news of activities in each issue of inCite as the program unfolds.

NYR2012 creates opportunities for libraries and librarians across all sectors to highlight and celebrate reading in all its forms as well as the critical role of libraries in this space. Whilst ideally linked to the core business of public and school libraries our thinking should not be limited to these sectors.

For special libraries there is opportunity to engage with parent organisations in a different way, perhaps by highlighting the importance and joy of reading, or working with literacy organisations to improve the literacy skills of staff.

For academic and TAFE libraries there is the opportunity to highlight reading for inspiration and pleasure – as well as for education.

The National Year of Reading 2012 website **www.love2read.org.au** contains all the information you need to participate in this important event.

My challenge to all ALIA members is to contribute one program, event or initiative to the NYR2012 calendar. It would be great to see each ALIA group support NYR2012 in an active and real way, perhaps by organising an event or providing support to other events. You can get started right now by signing up for the enewsletter on the website.

This is a real opportunity for the profession to come together and have a positive impact on the literacy skills, and the future of our nation.

Margaret Allen

ALIA President
margaret.allen@alia.org.au

YOUR INDUSTRY SNAPSHOT

Dictionary of Sydney gets a social life

To celebrate its first birthday and 600th entry, the Dictionary of Sydney has turned to social media and launched a facebook page and blog, where readers can interact with the content developed by historians, academics and cultural institutions. **dictionaryofsydney.wordpress.com** and **www.facebook.com/dictionaryofsydney**

Open public sector information principles launched

The Australian Information Commissioner launched *Principles On Open Public Sector Information*. The *Principles* provide a framework for government information management in Australia, setting out the central values of open public sector information - that it be freely available, easily discoverable, understandable, machine-readable and reusable. The *Principles* were developed by the Office of

the Australian Information Commissioner through a process of public consultation, and draw on considerable work in Australia and overseas into best practice government information management. For more information see: **www.oaic.gov.au/infopolicy-portal/reports_infopolicy.html**

LC transforms bibliographic framework

Transforming our Bibliographic Framework (**www.loc.gov/marc/transition/news/framework-051311.html**) – a new statement from the Library of Congress, has been made available for early review. There will be more news on the statement following the upcoming annual conference of the American Library Association. A website has been established for the Bibliographic Framework Transition Initiative at **www.loc.gov/marc/transition**.