

There is much happening in libraries at present – not all of it good. The recent announcement by the Queensland Government that some of their departmental libraries are to close has caused the ALIA Board and staff to galvanise around the *Dumb Idea* campaign. It is designed to demonstrate to the Premier and Cabinet in Queensland the value that their libraries provide and the risks associated with closing these vital services.

I urge all members of ALIA and library and information supporters to get behind this campaign. The sad fact is that some politicians and senior bureaucrats in Queensland (and potentially other



jurisdictions) do not understand that the quality of their policies and programmes is significantly compromised by not having access to high quality, accurate, and timely information provided by information professionals. This move by the Queensland Government is directly in line with the risks that I have raised in previous Frontline columns. Decision makers see the internet as a cheap and practical alternative to their library services. We know that it is not. We must make this point strongly and with hard evidence. ALIA is on the case, but, I reiterate, we need

members and supporters to assist us. Please go to the ALIA website, print off the *Dumb Idea* postcard, and send it to the Queensland Premier.

On a much more positive note, I was privileged to attend the IFLA Congress in Helsinki in August. There were 4000 delegates at the congress and I was able to meet many of the staff and office bearers from other library and information associations. It is my hope that ALIA can further strengthen these contacts and that we can learn from and share expertise and experiences internationally.

The current President of IFLA, Ingrid Parent, selected as the theme for her term, *Libraries – a force for change in transforming our societies*. There were many papers and meetings that I attended that attested to the role that all libraries play in transforming societies. Public libraries transforming communities through literacy and community engagement; university libraries transforming themselves to meet the changing learning styles of students; and the transformational nature of school librarianship in the new discovery based pedagogies were all canvassed at the Congress.

It is also clear that libraries across the world are grappling with similar issues to us. Copyright complexities, the tumultuous e-book publishing arena, and the view that libraries are not necessary now that the internet is ubiquitous, were all key issues raised

and discussed by library and information professionals from across the world. It is very clear to me that ALIA must take its place in the international discussions and decisions around these issues and that ALIA members must be engaged in these debates. So far, no country has the magic solution to these issues, but the conversations are underway and as the key library and information representative for Australia, ALIA and its members have a role in contributing to the solutions.

On behalf of all members I would like to welcome Sue McKerracher to her role as Executive Director of ALIA. Sue commenced in late August and it would be fair to say she has had to hit the ground running with the Queensland Government announcements, the changes to TAFE funding in Victoria and New South Wales, and the closure of some school libraries across the country. Sue is doing a wonderful job of leading the ALIA team and providing the best advice possible to Board members.

It is sad for me to be farewelling a key ALIA staff member at this time. Rob Miller who has been acting Executive Director since early this year has decided to leave ALIA. Rob not only kept ALIA House and the Board operating for much of this year, but he is also responsible for the Library Initiative, a project where the Commonwealth Government funded devices into public libraries around the country for the use of people with visual impairment. The project was a great success, thanks to Rob's vision, passion, and organisational skills! Rob has also been a great supporter of the National Year of Reading, assisting the Founding Partners through the planning and delivery of this major initiative. Thank you most sincerely, Rob. May your future be full of red wine, fishing in wonderful places, and a great golf handicap!

Please – don't forget to print and send the *Dumb Idea* postcard to the Queensland Government to demonstrate the value that library and information professionals, and in particular our colleagues in the Queensland public service, provide to good planning, policy, and decision making.

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## INDUSTRY SNAPSHOT

### Have FAIFE

IFLA's Committee on Freedom of Access to Information and Freedom of Expression (FAIFE) has released an international code of ethics. The code is also available in a shorter version for quick reference. [www.ifla.org/en/news/ifla-code-of-ethics-for-librarians-and-other-information-workers](http://www.ifla.org/en/news/ifla-code-of-ethics-for-librarians-and-other-information-workers)