

Keeping ALIA relevant to our members – the leadership team discuss

Our members are experiencing enormous changes. Library and information professionals are being asked to come out from behind the desk, member organisations are embracing new technologies and collaborating with new partners. The Association needs to adapt too, to mirror these changes by becoming even more inclusive, collaborative, open, and member-focused.

When ALIA moved from a branch structure to a national office in the 1990s (for good, practical reasons), some of the sense of ownership shifted too. Of course, we have a strong Board of Directors, who set the direction of the Association, but, over time, other members have begun to feel less connected – and yet connection is one of the main reasons why we join associations.

So, we need to find a different balance; one which retains the economies of scale and efficiencies of a national office function, while making it easier for groups and committees to participate and to help the Board of Directors shape ALIA going forward.

In shaping the ALIA of the future, professional services have to be the core of what we do. Course accreditation, professional development, careers, training, awards, copyright: these services are what make us a professional association.

Our members believe in freedom of access to information, and we must reflect this value. An important example is our website, which needs a major overhaul, so that visitors can find what they are looking for more easily.

ALIA systems and processes have been greatly refined over the last few years, but there may still be opportunities to do things better and to be smart about achieving the desired outcomes in ways that add value at no extra cost to members.

We are confident that advances in technology, innovative ways of working, re-energised relationships, and new partnerships can help us achieve even more for our members in the future.

Professional Services

Our profession is constantly changing and as we face new challenges in technology, systems, and approaches, there is a need for us to keep up-to-date and develop new skills, knowledge, and confidence, to build our own successful and rewarding careers as well as helping the profession remain relevant. But there are ways that the Professional Services teams works to stay relevant – and aid members to do the same.

ALIA continues to support higher education working with relevant institutions to advance quality courses that deliver new professionals for the sector. Having completed an ALIA accredited qualification gives confidence to employers when recruiting staff. ALIA works with education providers and consults with other stakeholders – including students and employers – to ensure courses equip graduates with the knowledge, skills, and capabilities to provide their clients with the right information at the right time. The accreditation process is concerned with ensuring the quality of the course and its relevance to current and emerging library and information practice.

ALIA's Professional Development Scheme provides a mechanism of formal recognition for ongoing learning. In changing workplace environments, it helps build confidence and credibility and allows you to track your learning progress. It supports coping positively with change by constantly updating your skills and knowledge. Become more productive and efficient by reflecting on your learning and identifying gaps in your knowledge and experience. Having certified practitioner status showcases your commitment to professionalism.

ALIA Training builds on existing partnerships to deliver quality programs to the profession. It provides employers with targeted staff development that aligns with organisational goals. Training activities are closely linked to developing skills for contemporary competence in the profession.

Copyright reflects the essence of ALIA's ability to have a significant impact on the broad national information landscape. We actively support our members in areas such as copyright legislation reform and practical advice at work.

Copyright issues are on the information agenda at the moment with the release of the Australian Law Reform Commission's (ALRC) Issues Paper Copyright and the Digital Economy www.alrc.gov.au/publications/copyright-ip42. Detailed information about how ALIA will support your interests on this issue can be found on page 25 and by following our pop-up wiki at aliacopyright.wikispaces.com.

Member Services

Member Services has a broad range of support functions under its umbrella. Events and conferences, our social media channels, support of our ALIA groups and e-lists, the publishing function, and of course the attraction and retention of members to the Association are all elements of the Member Services team portfolio.

We see ourselves as a customer support service and members as our customers. Improving the timeliness and quality of the support we provide you is the number one aspiration we have. You have the right to have every experience with ALIA staff be a positive one and our aim is to deliver that.

Informing our members of what is happening in the profession and the role the Association plays in framing the core discussions and debates continues to grow in importance for us. Our expanded use of our social media tools to inform and receive ideas will continue to grow. We will ensure that INCITE continues to reflect the common trends and themes of the profession and publishes what your colleagues are thinking and doing. Our scholarly journals will continue to reflect a more formalised dissemination of new practices and research shaping change in the industry.

We will look at all forms of communication we use with our members. The website, e-lists, wikis, direct mail and social media provide information channels. Our challenge is to ensure that we use the right ones at the right time.

Staying Connected

One of ALIA's favourite ways to communicate with members and to stay relevant is by connecting with them on social media. We are on Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest and LinkedIn.

We enjoy the two way communication that Social Media provides. It allows us to get the word out on issues that are important to our members immediately. It also allows us a wonderful insight into the issues and events that are important to our members.

Social media allows ALIA to engage with members and the library community in general in a

fun and informal setting. We enjoy posting fun links on Mondays as well as information about serious issues regarding the library and information sector.

If you haven't done so already, please follow us and let us know what you think, what you want to see and any fun links you find about the library and information sector.

Twitter: @alianational

Facebook: www.facebook.com/alianational

Pinterest: pinterest.com/alianational

LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=898717&trk=hb_side_g

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