

Thank you and good night

By the time this issue of *INCITE* reaches you I will be in Canberra, heading for the Annual General Meeting and handing over to incoming President Vanessa Little and the new Board of Directors. So it's timely for me to be reflecting on the last two years as a Director and President, it has been an interesting, challenging, frustrating and rewarding experience.

I have had the opportunity to meet many members and the privilege to get to know the National Office staff and work with them.

I've been challenged by the expectations of members (and non-members) and I've come to understand the issues facing specific sectors of our profession in much more depth.

One of the things that I knew before, but hadn't fully understood, is the extent of volunteering that goes on in, and for, ALIA. It is really amazing and it is absolutely true that ALIA could not achieve half of what it does without our many members giving so freely of their time, skills, energy and enthusiasm – thank you.

The National Office staff are great supporters of members and our profession. It's true that not all the Canberra staff are library professionals, but they are all great supporters of what we do and work hard on our behalf to further the objectives of the Association. And the State Managers, all of whom are experienced and talented library professionals, provide that important local link into the Association and the National office.

The challenges facing the Board have been many and varied, resulting in some difficult and sobering discussions around the Board table. While our financial position has improved significantly over the last two years, this still remains one of the biggest challenges to the Board, National Office staff and ALIA members.

Naturally there is some frustration regarding goals as yet not reached, and top of mind for me is the recruitment process for the Executive Director, which is still underway but I hope will be resolved shortly. This has, in turn, delayed somewhat our progress around a number of important strategic initiatives expressed in ALIA's Strategic Plan 2011–2015.

However, I do think the greatest challenge we face is that of the future of our profession. I have discussed this previously in this column and also my own optimism about the future of libraries and librarianship as a profession, but this remains a big challenge, and one in which we must all engage. I was disappointed in the lack of engagement by members in our 2011 National Advisory Congress



discussions on this topic but I am encouraged by the discussion among the newer members of our profession who come to us with enthusiasm and new ideas about what it is to be a library or information professional. Our future is in our hands and relies on each of us advocating for libraries and librarians in our own sphere of influence – this is not just ALIA's role, it is **every** member's role.

The National Year of Reading is certainly one of the highlights of my term. While it is proving to be an astoundingly successful initiative in engaging people in reading, establishing fruitful collaborations,

and promoting libraries, it is the recognition by the Federal Government of the trust, value, diversity and broad reach of Australia's library community that is most rewarding and heartening for our future.

Finally, I'd like to acknowledge and thank some specific individuals who have supported and enabled me to take on this role. My sincere thanks to the leadership team at the State Library of Western Australia, who have had to take on additional responsibilities to provide me with the capacity to undertake this role. I'd also like to acknowledge Sue Hutley (former Executive Director) and Rob Miller (Acting Executive Director) for their advice, support and leadership. And, most importantly, my family who have put up with the interruptions caused by the long haul between Perth and Canberra on so many occasions with good grace and humour.

Margaret Allen
ALIA President
margaret.allen@alia.org.au

INDUSTRY SNAPSHOT

Staying shipshape

In our March issue Elizabeth Swan mentioned great memories from the high seas on the Information Online Conference cocktail cruise in 1988. She'd like to tweak that memory – the correct name of the ship encountered and serenaded with a rousing round of Waltzing Matilda was the *STS Young Endeavour* rather than the new *HMS Endeavour*. The *STS Young Endeavour* is a sail training ship operated by the Royal Australian Navy. Apologies for any confusion this may have caused.