

FACING THE FUTURE

The ALIA Future of the Profession Board project continues to build momentum. Following the 2013 National Advisory Congress (NAC) meetings around the nation, ALIA will host the Future of the Profession Summit next month in Sydney to discuss the outcomes and concerns raised along with feedback from the discussion paper posted on the ALIA Futures wiki at aliafutures.wikispaces.com.

ALIA's role is to support our members, remembering that together we are stronger.

The key objective of the Summit is to provide an opportunity for library leaders to define what our public-facing position should be on the future of the profession and how this should inform ALIA's strategies, policies and activities in 2014 and beyond. Sizeable attendances at this year's NAC meetings and workshops are a clear demonstration of members' concern and motivation to, as President Julie Rae writes in her Frontline column this month, "decide what future we want for libraries

and the professionals who work in this sector and then go out and build that future".

Change is a constant factor for library and information professionals along with everyone else. It can be positive, delivering improved skills, resources and knowledge, and it can be challenging, in that economic reality plus improved technology often increases the pressure on institutions and organisations to reduce costs. ALIA's role in this future, as the discussion paper says, is "to support our members through the changes that lie ahead and to strive for the best possible outcomes, remembering, always, that together we are stronger".

We Believe in Libraries

When you begin planning, renovating or simply changing the feel of your library, wouldn't it be a comfort to know that the people you're speaking with speak your language, support your vision and are really willing to work with you.

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WHAT DO YOU THINK?

What do you think? Have your say ahead of the Future of the Profession Summit. You can comment anytime until the end of October 2013.

- Attend your local NAC workshop
- Become a wiki editor at aliafutures.wikispaces.com/home
- Email advocacy@alia.org.au
- Join the discussion on ALIA's Facebook page and through Twitter #aliafutures

IN REPLY

"The golden age of information is coming, the question is whether or not today's library and information professionals can make it their own."

So says the ALIA discussion paper on the Future of the Profession. Libraries Alive! Director and long-standing ALIA member Ian McCallum is just one respondent to the discussion.

Ian writes, "The recent history of libraries is the history of the technology they embrace, and this is not likely to change. In just 50 years the library profession has progressed from trained intermediaries needed for specialised searching if *anything* was to be found, to trained intermediaries needed in case *everything* is found".

"In less than half a century libraries have become computerised, but not automated. Face-to-face contact with

customers remains important, but increasingly such contact is filtered through social media."

Ian believes the golden age of information will require better

In less than half a century, libraries have become computerised, but not automated.

promotion of organisation skills, "because people will think that if they run a Google search they can navigate the big data world solo. The NBN will be a two-edged sword here: it will greatly improve access, and multiply the opportunities for information overload."

He concludes with recommendations to ensure practitioners and teachers have up to date technology skills, to continue to heavily promote the

value of libraries in the context of enabling digital literacy, using the NBN as a reason for upgrading library services nationally by positioning this as a way to sustain competitive advantage, and to bring out the voices of library users through

channels such as social media and interest groups, with the goal of "increasing the proportion of library users to total catchment population in order to 'harden' libraries against arbitrary funding cuts".

LIBRARIES AUSTRALIA FORUM 2013

What It Means to Be in The Cloud

Thursday 31 October

9 am–4.30 pm

University of Melbourne, Law Building 106, Theatre GM15

Cost: \$200

Enquiries/Registration

nla.gov.au/librariesaustralia/news-events/forum/2013-forum/
or 1800 026 155.

Registrations close Wednesday 16 October.

