



## **'AS A PROFESSION WE HAVE PLACED OURSELVES SQUARELY WITHIN CONSUMERIST DISCOURSE AND WE NOW HAVE TO FIND A WAY TO MAKE SUCH AN ECONOMY WORK FOR US.'**

Dear Editor,

I appreciate that Sue McKerracher was not writing primarily about funders in her Directline column in the June/July 2014 issue of *INCITE*, nonetheless her comments did start me thinking. I was particularly struck by the apparent gulf between funders and librarians. The decline in the funding of libraries is not a recent phenomenon and librarians responsible for drawing up library budgets should by now have well settled practices for engaging with funders and convincing them of the value of libraries. I now wonder if that is the case.

If our leaders believe that proposed budget cuts are in any other way inimical to the well-being of the institution, there should be sound evidence to support such a belief which then needs to be acted upon. While it is always good to have community support, we cannot expect the community to make the arguments and to provide the evidence that is needed to show the funders in what way their assumptions are wrong. We are the 'library professionals' and we are the ones who should be making the arguments and developing the strategies to ensure that funders do get the funding of libraries right.

This is not the place to point out the numerous inconsistencies in our professional position re libraries and the marketplace economy except to say that we cannot expect to use the language of the marketplace in our practice and then somehow expect to be exempt from its workings with regards to budgets and management from 'above'.

As a profession we have placed ourselves squarely within consumerist discourse and we now have to find a way to make such an economy work for us.

I would be interested in reading how librarians have developed relationships with their funding organisations and at what stage of the funding process they intervene to head off proposed 'ill-conceived' budget cuts.

Perhaps this would be a fruitful area for a comprehensive professional development program.

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**INCITE**  
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**TAKING CARE**  
**OF BUSINESS**

*INCITE* will be all business in October 2014, with our popular annual vendors' feature and our lift out LIS List product and services directory. Plus we are looking for contributions from members with your best advice to share on the business basics for library and information professionals.

With so many members managing all aspects of the business of libraries – from contracts to workplace safety, the challenge of policy development in the face of changing formats and shrinking budgets, and pondering how to hang on to your best people – this is the issue of *INCITE* to share your experiences, questions and opinions.

The deadline for contributions is 19 August 2014. Check the guidelines for contributions on the ALIA website and email your stories and images to [incite@alia.org.au](mailto:incite@alia.org.au). Please note all images must be high resolution (at least 300DPI, 500KB or higher) and sent separately as jpg files. Images may be reproduced in print and online.