

Indigenous matters

For ALIA President, **LYNDALL LEY**, engagement with Indigenous cultures matters.

Hello everyone.

This edition of *INCITE* is a special one for me as it further expands upon my presidential theme of Indigenous matters, and, as my very fulfilling year draws to its close, it's exciting to see what libraries of all types are doing to engage with First Nations' communities and collections. This issue shares some of those wonderful ideas and stories.

The concepts, knowledge and activities presented in these pages build on the work ALIA has been doing in relation to Indigenous matters, especially over the last year, and follows hot on the heels of the recently released report, *Improving library services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples*, which is very deserving of your time to read (for more information, see page 31). The report highlights initiatives that are already underway and may provide inspiration for others not so far along in their approach.

This is just one of the increasing numbers of resources at hand for those who want to expand their Indigenous community connections and engagement, as well as their cultural proficiency, including those produced by a number of larger libraries, such as that as the *Indigenous Library Services Strategy* of the State Library of Western Australia (bit.ly/2R9NYT7), and *Indigenous spaces in library places* by the State Library of New South Wales (bit.ly/2sQSaOh). You might consider enrolling in ALIA's Cultural Connections: Library Services for Indigenous Australians, a valuable three week professional development unit which examines ways to engage and support the Australian Indigenous community.

We are excited to be participating in UNESCO's International Year of Indigenous Languages (en.iyil2019.org) and to see so many libraries and cultural institutions supporting this work with a vibrant range of programs, events, exhibitions and services. ALIA is helping promote this very important year, and there are many ways that libraries can get involved, from highlighting Indigenous works in your library's collection, hosting talks from local members of Indigenous communities, to sharing some words from the local Indigenous language in your library.

In Australia, of the estimated original 250 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages, only around 120 are still spoken. Of these approximately 90% are endangered. This year of celebration is an opportunity to continue raising awareness and taking further actions to improve preservation and promotion of Australia's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages. Be in touch with your local community to see what you can do to take local action, sharing Indigenous stories with Indigenous voices.

It is very encouraging to see the increasing level of action being taken by libraries in relation to Indigenous services and collections, even though we still have room for improvement. I hope you find some inspiration within these pages. ✨

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