

Australian libraries in 2019

The New Year is a good time to reflect on the achievements of the previous 12 months, and the challenges and exciting opportunities of the year ahead.

In 2019, we are celebrating the 40th anniversary of *INCITE*. The theme for the first issues is the 'state of the nation' for libraries. Our lead article (page 18) paints a picture of an industry in the throes of change, without the funding to accommodate the demands of digital disruption. While some school, public and university libraries are benefiting from investment in flagship new buildings, operational funds across the board remain under pressure.

Federal, state and territory elections provide the opportunity for new advocacy conversations with incumbents and candidates, and with a federal election coming soon, we will be focusing on government relations in the first half of the year.

ALIA's own finances have been impacted by the need to repair and refurbish ALIA House as we reach the mid-point of the building's life. Opened in 1990 by the Hon Ros Kelly MP, ALIA House has been a valued asset of the Association for nearly three decades. For 2018-2019 we have commissioned a significant body of work, costing just over \$600,000, to keep the building fit for purpose and attractive to tenants.

This includes the renovation of the bathrooms, a complete refurbishment of the lift, and a new fit out for the ground floor vacant offices. As a result of the latter, we are pleased to welcome the Indigenous Allied Health Association as our new tenants for 2019. They join Mental Health Australia, the Australian College of Mental Health Nurses, and Museums Galleries Australia.

For our Personal Members, the employment landscape is a primary concern. Since 2014, ALIA has published an annual *Education, Skills and Employment Trend Report* to provide Members, educators and

40 years of *INCITE*

employers with insight into the number of students coming through and the number of jobs that await them.

There is no doubt the job market has been tight in recent years, but the latest figures from the Department of Employment indicate there will be 1,000 more jobs for qualified librarians by 2023. You can read the full report here (bit.ly/2KALRGq).

As of 1 January 2019, the terms of copyright for unpublished works are now the same as for published works. This significant change was approved by the federal government in June 2017, as a result of the lobbying efforts of the Australian Libraries Copyright Committee over many years, and the ALIA Cooking for Copyright campaign in 2015 (page 22).

This year, we can expect to see collecting institutions digitising unique, rare, valuable and inspiring content and making it freely available on the web for the first time. We celebrated this achievement by mailing each federal politician a thank you card reminding them of the difference this change makes for Australia's cultural institution and their users.

Finally, we were delighted by the response to our survey of Members and non-Members at the end of 2018. More than 1,500 people gave us their opinions about what ALIA is doing well and what we could be doing better. This insight will guide the ALIA Board to help fine-tune the strategic direction of the Association for 2019, and the ALIA House team with the information we need to help us reflect our Members' views, especially in terms of advocacy and education. Thank you to all those who participated. 🍀

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