

THE LIBRARY FEDERAL ELECTION AGENDA

The federal election will be held on 18 May 2019, and with just a few weeks until Australia votes, there are many ways that federal politicians could use their positions to improve library and information services for communities around Australia. Every vote counts and in 2019, ALIA is asking you to *Vote Library at the federal election*.

Few libraries are directly operated by the federal government, but they are all affected by federal government policy and legislation. In 2019, we asked our Members to comment on ALIA's draft election agenda and the feedback has helped fine tune our election 'asks'. Out of this consultation, we have arrived at the following 14 key agenda items for ALIA's 2019 [federal election agenda](#).

POLICY ASKS

1. Improved access to data and scholarly information through the development and trial of open access models for government-funded research.

While the federal government has made progress in opening up its own government data, open access models for government-funded research outside government departments and agencies remain unresolved.

2. Halt to government library closures and greater recognition of the role of library and information professionals in evidence-based decision-making.

Over the last three years, we have seen too many federal, state and territory department libraries close or be required to function on much reduced budgets and staffing levels. The skills of information professionals are essential for evidence-based policy, based on relevant, reliable, authoritative sources.

3. Greater recognition of the important part libraries play in literacy and learning for all ages.

We support Adult Learning Australia's call for a national [policy on lifelong learning](#) for all Australians.

4. Continued recognition of the important part libraries play in digital inclusion.

Libraries should be front of mind with politicians, their advisors, departments and agencies, and to ensure that libraries are appropriately funded for their contribution to digital inclusion.

5. A national early literacy strategy.

ALIA is part of a coalition of early childhood peak bodies, the [National Early Language and Literacy Coalition](#) (NELLC). The coalition received a three-year Ian Potter Foundation grant in 2018 to work with the federal government on developing a national strategy for early years.

6. Support for the long-term success of the Australian book industry.

ALIA works closely with other book industry associations under the Books Create Australia umbrella. It is vital that all parts of the book industry, from the creator through to the reader, work together to urge government to help create an environment that supports homegrown talent and a vibrant publishing industry.

Australians benefit from more than 13,600 libraries, serving more than 11 million active users across communities; education; government; research; health; law; and business locations right across the country. We want you to ask your local candidates the following library related questions before you decide who to vote for:

- Do you support a national early literacy strategy?
- Will you endorse the goal of a qualified library professional for every school?
- Will your Ministers insist on well-resourced library and information services run by qualified library professionals for their departments?
- Will you provide funding for public library buildings as community infrastructure?
- Do you support open access for government-funded research?
- Will you reform the Copyright Act and introduce fair use?
- Will you endorse further investment in digital access to cultural collections?

7. Quality library services for tertiary students enrolled in universities, TAFEs and private Registered Training Organisations (RTO).

There are more than a million domestic students studying in Australian universities and four million students enrolled in TAFE courses. They all need to have access to reliable information and resources.

8. Qualified library staff employed in every school library.

ALIA continues to advocate at national, state and territory level for qualified staff and well-funded school libraries, at both primary and secondary level.

9. United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

As a UN Member State, Australia signed up to the SDG in 2015. They are gradually gaining momentum at federal, state, territory and local level and libraries are asking the federal government to continue to implement policies that adhere to the SDG.

LEGISLATIVE ASKS

10. Further copyright law reform.

We are a founder member, and strong supporter, of the [Australian Libraries Copyright Committee \(ALCC\)](#) which has achieved major advances in copyright amendments to ensure that more content is released into the public domain and that creators continue to be appropriately rewarded. There is more to be done to make sure that our copyright laws keep up with the changes in technology and the different expectations of society.

11. Accreditation of higher education and VET courses by professional bodies.

ALIA accredits university, TAFE and RTO courses in library and information science at Diploma level and above. It is vitally important that professional bodies like ALIA continue to assess courses to ensure they meet the needs of contemporary learning and produce graduates with the knowledge needed to perform effectively in the modern workplace.

FUNDING ASKS

12. Further investment in digital access to cultural collections and digital infrastructure

Libraries hold the documentary heritage of the nation and we would like to make more of it available online, through Trove and other channels. We would like to see increased funding for digital infrastructure for academic and special libraries to aid the federal government's drive for national research infrastructure.

13. Funding for library buildings as a vital element of Australia's knowledge infrastructure

Libraries should be high on the list of infrastructure priorities, promoting their role in social inclusion for marginalised and disadvantaged groups through the provision of targeted programs, access to technology and free educational resources.

14. Funding for the delivery of e-government services through public libraries

Federal government digital initiatives have generally been introduced without consideration of the impact they will have on local government-funded public libraries. While these initiatives are an opportunity for governments to create efficiencies and make savings, they do not take into account citizens who are less digitally enabled. This sees thousands of clients of federal government Departments, (including Human Services, Jobs and Small Business, Education and Training, and Home Affairs) head to public libraries for help to navigate the complex websites and online forms that the government puts in place and merely results in cost-shifting from federal to local government.

If you want to promote libraries in the federal election this year, you can download [ALIA's Vote Library](#) posters, social media images, bin stickers, and our full election agenda. We would love to hear your thoughts on the campaign, on social media please tag your posts with #VoteLibrary and #auspol or you can email us (advocacy@alia.org.au). 🗳️



An investment in **libraries** is an investment in **real information from trusted sources**

Ask your candidates what they will do to support libraries



Australian Library and Information Association

FAIR Freedom of Access to Information and Research

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