National Policy Congress

The first ALIA National Policy Congress was held in Canberra on Friday 26 and Saturday 27 May 2000. The Congress, attended by seventy divisional delegates, was a wonderful event and has given a great kick-start to the next phase of change in the Association. The delegates represented all Australian states, and most Sections and Special Interest Groups.
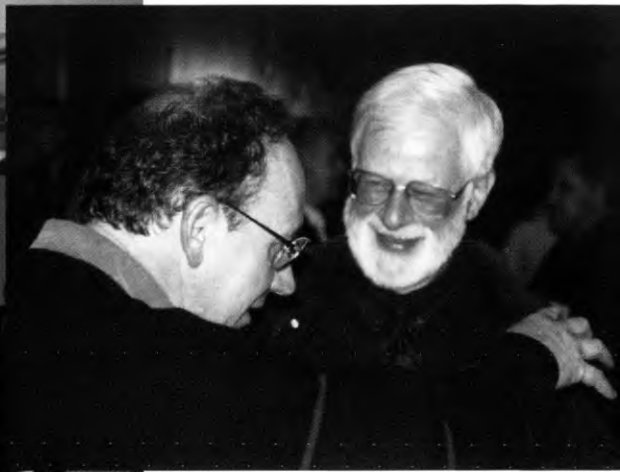
Ian McCallum, an ALIA member, guided the delegates through the process of examining the Divisional requirements to take the Association through the next stage of the renewal process, as we re-focus and think hard about our priorities for the coming years. In her opening comments, Mairéad Browne urged delegates to direct their energy towards activities and achievements rather than the propping up of organisational structures. Craig Anderson demonstrated this change of focus, by comparing the type of agenda used for meetings of the Board of Directors. No longer will these meetings be dominated by reports that are better considered prior to the meeting, but will instead be driven by the Objects of the Association and activities that are instrumental in those Objects.

The themes from the Directors' meeting and from the discussion at the National Policy Congress was support for a flatter, more flexible framework for ALIA, and for partnerships with other organisations, in order to broaden the scope of our operations and influence and to produce more benefits for members. A great deal of time was spent discussing and teasing out the issues within divisional requirements, and, listed below are the 'Top nine' issues, identified by the National Policy Congress delegates.

1. Structure based on self-nominating groups around areas of interest.

2. Provision of effective, well-defined local presence.

3. Funding formulae should take into account factors such as per capita, programs and location.

4. Renewed emphasis on member services.

5. Groups be approved by Board against a set of transparent criteria with reciprocal responsibilities.

6. Issues based fora for professional needs/ purposes.

7. Flatter organisational structure.

8. Funding for specific projects and/or ongoing programs.

9. Partnerships and alliances with local and international organisations.

Delegates from the National Policy Congress have fine-tuned the recommendations on these issues for consideration by the Board at its July meeting. When the delegates' report is available to the Board, it will be published in *inCite*. A further nine issues identified by delegates will also be considered by the Board of Directors.

The Congress delegates also had an opportunity to examine the issues concerning divisional conferences and the accreditation of libraries. This gathering of so many representatives from around the country was also an ideal opportunity to communicate important information about the impact of the GST on divisions, the responsibilities of divisional treasurers, and the ALIA CPD program. ∎

More pictures can be viewed on ALIAnet, at http://www.alia.org.au/npc/2000/