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### Feedback to your Board of Directors

Do you have an idea, compliment or concern about your Association? Contact any director below on personal issues and ideas will be reviewed at each meeting of the Board.

E-mail to [feedback@alia.org.au](mailto:feedback@alia.org.au) will be automatically forwarded to all Board members.

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## Big hairy and audacious goals!

November kicks off with our Board of Directors meeting and the National Policy Congress. This year the Congress is taking a broader view and focussing on policy and issues of relevance to the sector as a whole. The Board will then link these back to the ambitions of the Association through the 2003–2004 plan.

The items on the NPC agenda — the Information Agenda, LISEKA, and the ALIA draft 2003–2004 plan — are about generating ideas and setting BHAGs (Big Hairy and Audacious Goals). Most of us spend most of our work time managing day to day demands. The opportunities and time to be creative, bold and visionary are too rare, but need to be taken.

Rosemary Herceg and Tim Flattery run Pophouse, a successful business that thrives on ideas generation. They have written a 'how to' book *Ideas generation. Tools for being constantly fresh, creative and original* (Lansdowne, 2000). They include a chapter on useful internet sites, including legal, patent, incubators, their favourite sites and The Ultimate Libraries Guide which lists twenty-five national library sites [yes, Australia is there] with a caption that will stimulate the left hemisphere of any library web designer's brain 'We have included a list of weird and wonderful library sites — including places like Latvia! Often, the most off-beat net surfing can result in the most interesting ideas. Don't be afraid to look under the rocks!' (p227) I'll leave that thought there.

The book eases the reader in by describing the Pophouse Ideas process and offering suggestions and tips on how to break out of the mould and keep your brain thinking originally. Tip n°1 is to 'never again say you have an idea'. People, they claim, have half ideas, or as they call them

'The Mother Thought' (TMT). This is then layered with smaller thoughts that can be changed a million times without affecting the TMT. Businesses are encouraged to manage ideas. A suggestion for the workplace is to set up an electronic ideas room where staff can place and add to ideas. Every few weeks these can then be reviewed and those that at the time appear to have potential pursued further, leaving the others to cook a bit longer. A key is in having volume of ideas.

The authors then offer their 21 Step Ideas Production Line: S.I.m.P.L.e. The first step is to think big and start at the end first so that the idea has a chance to breath before the sabotaging takes its toll. The single biggest killer of ideas is logistics. The Deliberately Breaking the Rules (DBR) game helps avoid that by being a way of training your mind to say yes when your nature is to say no. Logistics does have its place once you get to Step 9 and go through the Lowest Hanging Fruit exercise to describe the ideas that are the: easiest to achieve; easiest to explain; simplest to defend; strongest; and most opportunistic (p157). These are the ideas that are the easiest to pick off the ideas tree and are those that are 'so simple I could [I wish] have thought of that'. The remaining steps get that idea through to doing the deal.

ALIA and ratio Pty Ltd are working on the potential for delivering a training program based on the products they developed for the Australian National Training Authority on [innovation@work](mailto:innovation@work). Three guides, for trainers, managers and Training Package developers were produced under the title *Innovation > Ideas that work*. The latest publication *Six degrees of innovation* provides a practical example of how an organisation can use and embed innovation skills into processes, products and services.

Now, back to those BHAGs. Devised by Stanford Business School professors Jerry Porras and James Collins, BHAGs are those incredibly challenging goals that visionary successful organisations set themselves. They are goals that when they are set the organization is not sure how it is going to achieve them but they coalesce the organisation to change to do so. A BHAG breeds ideas and innovation. ■