

letters to the editor – **your** voice



Library funding

In the 1970s, Adelaide's western suburbs were the least serviced with public libraries in the whole of Australia, while within the state of South Australia we only had a pathetic 13 per cent coverage with public libraries.

A group of us, known as CROW (Concerned Residents of the Western Suburbs of Adelaide), threatened to rip off our State Library (which could then be borrowed from) unless something was done.

Terrified – in our version of history! – our

then Premier Don Dunstan made \$2m available to develop libraries in our western suburbs. And thereby he began a domino effect which has now resulted in a 100 per cent coverage of our state.

On the federal front, I remember being at a library conference in 1975 and that Gough Whitlam, then our Prime Minister, said: "I can't wait to get my hands on the Horton Report into Public Libraries in Australia, and when I do so, I shall act upon it!"

But we all know what happened to Gough Whitlam in 1975! Farewell Gough, and

farewell to any chance of federal aid for Australia's public libraries in the near future.

However, we now have a chance that Kevin Rudd may be successful in gaining office. And if so, just maybe he could be interested in giving some federal aid to Australia's hard pressed public libraries.

We'll see.

Arthur Mortimer, Exeter, South Australia

An ALIAwiki?

'Using blogs and wikis to communicate with library clients' (inCite, Dec. 2006) made interesting reading regarding wikis. Being information professionals, shouldn't we create a wiki for our own profession in Australia? Just think what we could develop for our own benefit – a way to quickly access relevant information on our own profession; a manual of best practice for many information sectors; enhancing professional development, the sharing of knowledge and best practice within our profession; and augmenting ALIA membership.

The wiki could benefit students; new graduates; experienced librarians refreshing their knowledge, or catching up on a new concept they may have missed; those entering new roles or project areas. It could also contain enhanced details of ALIA activities, conferences, groups and e-mail lists, etc; and, while not for commercial purposes, links to companies supporting our industry, for example library removalists, library systems.

While encompassing much more than only ALIA, would ALIA be willing to host and foster an ALIAwiki?

Lachlan Garland, Sandringham, VIC

David Pruss, ALIA's IT Manager, replies:

ALIA National Office has consulted with ALIA members, groups and committees to determine which enhancements should be included in our website development. We have been evaluating numerous possibilities for future development that will benefit ALIA members and the wider community and wikis have been identified in the category of knowledge tools.

We believe that enhancements such as wikis will be great for ALIA. We welcome any contributions or suggestions.

