

## Australian libraries on the world stage

The recent conference of the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) in South Africa provided an opportunity for the Australian library community to demonstrate their international contribution to the profession. Dr Alex Byrne has made a magnificent contribution to IFLA as President over the past year and through many roles before that. His continuing commitment to the IFLA Free Access to Information and Freedom of Expression (FAIFE) Committee and indeed the issue of freedom of expression has resulted in IFLA becoming a highly valued contributor to international fora, including the World Summit for the Information Society. On behalf of the Australian library profession I would like to record our thanks to Alex for his work, and for his continuing commitment to advocate on information issues.

Many Australians also contribute to IFLA as members of standing committees, presenters at IFLA conferences and attendees. Australia punches, as they say, well above our weight, with Australians active in most IFLA activities. ALIA has been a committed IFLA member for many years as a member of the following IFLA sections: Public Libraries; Document Delivery & Resource Sharing; Information Technology; Education & Training; Library Theory & Research; Asia & Oceania; Management & Marketing Management of Library Associations; Information Literacy; Continuing Professional Development & Workplace Learning; Library History. Information on ALIA's participation can be found at <<http://www.alia.org.au/governance/committees/external/>>.

I encourage you to consider being a part of ALIA's contribution in IFLA, particularly as 2010 draws near. As you may have heard by now, IFLA's 2010 annual conference will be held in Brisbane. The IFLA conferences are major events with over 3000 participants and many pre-conference events held in the region before the conference. The opportunity to network is unparalleled in the profession — participants will find much in common with colleagues from every continent and many countries.

A special contribution was made by the Australian library community to the 2007 IFLA conference. In addition to the wonderful work of Sharon Karasmanis and her colleagues raising funds which paid registration fees for sixteen African librarians to attend the conference, the National Library of Australia sponsored a Tiwi Community Library Officer from the Northern Territory and a member of the staff from the National Library of Cambodia to attend. ALIA hopes to be able to work with the Australian community to support many from the Asia-Pacific region to attend the 2010 conference, particularly those who have not attended a conference before.

During the IFLA conference the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Global Libraries initiative presented its 2007 Access to Learning Award of

US\$1 million to the Northern Territory Library (NTL). The award recognises the Library's innovative approach to bringing computer and Internet technology to remote Indigenous communities through its 'Our Story', database, part of the Libraries and Knowledge Centres Program. The database takes a critical issue of cultural heritage and uses new technologies to enable communities to have access to audio, video, pictures and text on library computers to help understand their heritage and increase their technology and literacy skills. The program was recently evaluated by a committee of experts and you can read a summary of the findings in an article by Professor Nakata in the latest issue of *Australian Academic and Research Libraries*.

The program is an outstanding contribution to supporting literacy, communities, education and communities across the Northern Territory. Jo McGill, Director of the Northern Territory Library, and those who contributed to the development of the Centres, are to be congratulated on their work. The award funds will assist to increase training opportunities for NTL community library officers and library users, and expand the Learning Knowledge Centres Program in other communities.

International relations is an area identified in the ALIA Board's recent review of committees which will require thought and development of a policy and program. With IFLA coming to Australia it provides ALIA with a specific opportunity to focus on issues. The policy does, however, need to be built upon a strong foundation. The Australian and New Zealand Library communities have been very active in supporting their regional colleagues, through training, support for conference attendance by groups such as the Association of Parliamentary Librarians of Asia and the Pacific and of course through IFLA. The Board has agreed that this is a priority area for work over the next year and will be calling for input from institutional and personal members. Please start thinking about what you think that ALIA should be doing in this arena.

ALIA is also developing a closer relationship with our nearest library association — the Library & Information Association New Zealand Aotearoa (LIANZA). An agreement has been developed which was signed at their annual conference in September. Members of both organisations will be able to attend events at member prices. We have also agreed to work together as appropriate on the 2010 IFLA Conference to be hosted by ALIA in Brisbane, collaborate on professional development opportunities, share knowledge and take joint action where appropriate on intellectual property issues, for example, relating to advocacy, internet filtering and copyright, and work jointly to consider international relations issues and develop a plan.



Roxanne Missingham  
ALIA President

### Feedback to your Board of Directors

Board members welcome your comments and feedback. Please feel free to contact a Board member at any time.

E-mail [feedback@alia.org.au](mailto:feedback@alia.org.au) with your comments.

Roxanne Missingham, President  
ph 02 6277 7102  
[roxanne.missingham@alia.org.au](mailto:roxanne.missingham@alia.org.au)

Derek Whitehead  
Vice-president  
ph 03 9214 8333  
[derek.whitehead@alia.org.au](mailto:derek.whitehead@alia.org.au)

Michelle Brennan, Director  
ph 08 9405 5490  
[michelle.brennan@alia.org.au](mailto:michelle.brennan@alia.org.au)

Philip Keane, Director  
ph 08 8222 3224  
[philip.keane@alia.org.au](mailto:philip.keane@alia.org.au)

Damian Lodge, Director  
ph 02 6933 2172  
[damian.lodge@alia.org.au](mailto:damian.lodge@alia.org.au)

Helen Partridge, Director  
ph 07 3864 9047  
[helen.partridge@alia.org.au](mailto:helen.partridge@alia.org.au)

Kate Watson, Director  
ph 07 5459 4417  
[kate.watson@alia.org.au](mailto:kate.watson@alia.org.au)