

Frontline



Dagmar Schmidmaier AM
ALIA President

Feedback to your Board of Directors

Do you have an idea, a compliment or a concern about your Association? Contact any Director and your ideas will be reviewed at the next Board meeting.

E-mail to feedback@alia.org.au will be automatically forwarded to all Board members.

Dagmar Schmidmaier AM,
President
ph 0411 140 817
dagmar.schmidmaier@alia.org.au

Roxanne Missingham,
Vice-president
ph 02 6277 7102
roxanne.missingham@alia.org.au

Ann Ritchie, Director
ph 08 8922 8756
ann.ritchie@alia.org.au

Rachael Browning, Director
ph 0407 310 870
rachael.browning@alia.org.au

Philip Keane, Director
ph 08 8222 3224
philip.keane@alia.org.au

Michelle Brennand, Director
ph 08 9405 5490
michelle.brennand@alia.org.au

Helen Partridge, Director
ph 07 3864 9047
helen.partridge@alia.org.au

As ALIA prepares to welcome three new directors to the Board through our annual elections, it is timely to reflect on the role and responsibilities of directors. After you are successfully elected, you are required to consent in writing to acting as a director (and to resign in writing at the completion of your term). The appropriate forms are lodged with ASIC and copies are kept by the company, ALIA.

Each member of the Board is issued with ALIA's *Modus Operandi*, which includes the ALIA Constitution and By-laws, outlines how ALIA operates and details the responsibilities and obligations of directors and the Executive Director.

There are now many sources of information in relation to the responsibilities of directors due to the heightened awareness in the community of the importance of meeting legal obligations and maintaining high standards of ethical behaviour. The ALIA Board regularly receives information from a publication called

'Board Builder' which focuses on issues facing not-for-profit boards such as ALIA and provides very useful information for directors.

During our review and planning phase last year the Board identified the need to develop and offer a 'board readiness' program for prospective directors and the Governance Standing Committee has been working on this with a view to be able to offer a program later in 2007. This will be a very valuable addition to ALIA's professional development program.

The creation of Board standing committees has ensured that there is a clear focus on promoting and progressing the strategic directions of the Association consistent with the objects of ALIA as set out in our planning documents. It has also allowed directors to contribute to and enhance the profile and standing of the association through their leadership in chairing the standing committees. I have worked with Boards on both

sides of the fence for over fifteen years and know that it requires careful balancing on behalf of the CEO as well as by board members. In the ALIA context, board members have the final responsibility for the successful operation of the company, that is, meeting its stated objects. In achieving this, both the Board and the Executive Director need to work to ensure that there is a strong professional working relationship that builds on professional respect and trust. It is the Executive Director and staff who are there 'for the long haul' and have the responsibility to ensure that the policies are implemented, whereas directors are there for comparatively short periods with at least two new directors each year. This high turnover on the Board has both advantages and disadvantages that need to be understood.

This month I am sharing my column with Rachael Browning, one of our younger and very passionate professionals. ✨

Passionate professionals join ALIA!

May 2007 will be my final Board meeting as an ALIA Director. As May approaches I am reflecting on this experience as a professional. Specifically, what motivated me to nominate and what will I take away from this two-year experience?

When nominating for election, each candidate is required to write a 200-word statement of professional concerns. In my statement I emphasised my ability to contribute as a young and forward-focused member of the profession. I wanted to be part of planning for the future. A future I would be part of. This was really only half of the decision equation. This half related to the thinking aspect of the decision. The other half of the equation was the emotion-based aspect, that as a passionate professional I had a contribution to make to the Association to which I chose to belong.

For me the Association is a community of professionals that reaches beyond my workplace, state sector and age group. It links me with other professionals, and with issues and topics that broaden my connection

with the profession. Actively contributing to ALIA connects me as one to many. To me this is the value of the professional association membership.

Being a Director gave me an opportunity to be part of the future-shaping process of and for the Association. This included the strategic planning and development of the 2007 plan. My contribution centered on my role as Chair of the Membership and Awards Standing Committee.

What I take from this two-year experience is an awareness of the immense member involvement in achieving the goals of the Association. Members are contributing at the local, state, national and international level. Members are working together with an Association that connects *you* – one to many. As a Director, I represent these members. During my time as a Director I sought to represent the passionate members who are contributing to the future of the Association.

So would I do it again? Yes, I would, and with passion!

Rachael Browning