



# letters to the editor – **your** voice

*There has been some recent discussion on the e-lists about membership value and membership cost. These subjects are always worth revisiting, to ensure members are getting the Association they need and want. I hope, if you feel strongly about these issues, that you will raise them at your NAC meeting(s) this year, or directly with one of your Board members. These are recent posts from the libtech list, giving two members' opinions.*

## **Membership: value vs. cost**

Membership cost upfront would be a heavy financial burden for me; I opt for the monthly deduction, which doesn't seem so bad. I hope other members know that this option exists.

When I moved back to the city from Emerald (in Central Queensland), after a three and a half year break in my ALIA membership, I realised that there were a lot of active ALIA members doing work in committees: ALIA Qld Library Technicians, ALIA NewGrads, ALIA Quorum. So I thought I'd take the plunge and go check out these meetings and see what was happening. I realised that ALIA itself is just a name; it is the members – who volunteer their time to create professional development opportunities, write presentations, organise conferences and so on – who are ALIA. Through attending events and volunteering my time on committees, I have gained

the most out of ALIA: the networks that have assisted me in furthering my career; opportunities to present at conferences and share my knowledge with others (and then share theirs with me!); scholarships that enabled me to research areas that I have a passion for in the LIS industry; discounts to attend professional development events, such as conferences, short courses and the like; a monthly journal that lets me know what's happening in my industry. All that is my answer to 'why should I join ALIA?' Without ALIA I wouldn't be where I am now professionally. And hey, I am ALIA!

**Sharon Uthman ALIATech, (on aliaLIBTECH)**

I agree, what any member gets out of ALIA is definitely related to what the member puts in. Sharon said it so well: 'ALIA itself is just a name...the members...are ALIA'. I can see the point in considering tiered membership costs. To me, however, equity means that all members get the same benefits. LT and Associate members do get more benefits for their fee, with eligibility for the PD scheme and ALIA awards. Awards such as the Library Technician of the Year and the Dunn and Wilson scholarship are available to all LT members (and only LT members). I don't think it would be right if the award was tiered so that those who paid less received less, or vice versa.

**Tania Barry AALIA (CP), (on aliaLIBTECH)**

## **Librarians in local government**

It is frightening that some local councils in Queensland are endeavouring to switch to the WorkChoices regime, thus trading away public holidays, penalty rates and overtime currently paid to local government employees, including library workers ('Councils want IR choices', Ewin Hannan, *The Australian*, 12 April, page 1). I was for over 20 years a local government employee in the public library sphere; I am appalled that these workers are being targeted in this fashion. Local government librarians are some of the most underpaid in the profession, and it will be ever harder to attract candidates to these positions if they become even more low paid. In my opinion, all local government employees should consider this matter seriously before casting their vote at the next federal election.

**Nora Martin AALIA, Allambie Heights**

**Your letters on any issue of relevance to the library and information sector are welcomed.**

The opinions expressed in the magazine are those of the authors and not necessarily the official policy of the Australian Library and Information Association. All letters should be addressed to the *inCite* editor and may be e-mailed to [incite@alia.org.au](mailto:incite@alia.org.au), or faxed to 02 6282 2249, or posted to: Your voice, ALIA, PO Box 6335, Kingston 2604. Letters will be accepted for publication until the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month. Please include your name and postal address with your letter or e-mail.



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