



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.

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## Finding a voice for libraries

As we enter 2008 we are bombarded with celebrations – it's the Year of the Scout <http://centenary.scouts.com.au/main.sp?iStoryID=12117302>, International Year of Planet Earth 2007-2009 <http://yearofplanetearth.org/index.html>, International Year of the Reef <http://www.iyor.org/> and International Year of the Potato <http://www.potato2008.org/>. While I was listening to ABC radio over the New Year, I heard a piece on the International Year of the Potato. This left me wondering how we as a sector, can work towards finding a voice for libraries and library users in 2008.

In 2007, the ABC series *'The Librarians'* gave a more public profile to our profession and to public libraries in particular. But surely it is not the role of a comedy television show to promote a particular library or service.

For ALIA the challenge is to respond to members needs while tackling national issues as they arise. Many of you may remember the advice of former ALIA Executive Director, Virginia Walsh. She stressed the importance to "identify the problems, issues and solutions" in all our advocacy work; reminding us that while it may be nice to visit a Minister's office, to do so without an agenda does not result in meaningful outcomes. Her paper 'Lobby for libraries' highlights many important principles for advocacy (<http://www.alia.org.au/publishing/speeches/lobby-libraries.html>). Her advice is valuable, remaining timely and relevant for all library staff and ALIA officers.

In 2008, ALIA will continue to advocate on a range of professional issues – the perennial debate of internet filtering, supporting the proposed extension of the current legal deposit scheme to include audiovisual and electronic material, supporting the national broadband strategy and in particular, pursuing our first object:

*...to promote the free flow of information and ideas in the interest of all Australians and a thriving culture, economy and democracy.*

The ALIA Board, together with the ALIA Public Libraries Advisory Committee, is

discussing a program of advocacy for Australia's public libraries. I have written to the federal government requesting a meeting enabling us to participate in the consultation process occurring later this year. We will be working closely with the Friends of Libraries Australia (FOLA), Public Libraries Australia (PLA) and many other organisations.

Together with the Australian School Library Association, (ASLA) we are lobbying the government on the issue of recognising the need for qualified teacher librarians and assurance of quality content to support the national school computers initiative.

These are critical issues to ensure that Australians are able to access quality information while developing lifelong learning skills. Libraries play a crucial role in supporting literacy, information literacy, developing educated business and social communities. As the program develops, we will be working with members across all states on issues of sustainable services and funding.

Our colleagues in New Zealand ran a major campaign on the themes of connecting people to information through libraries. Their approach offers insights upon which we can build. New Zealand also houses many interesting libraries. Our family holiday to the country's South Island included visiting some marvelous small (and large) libraries. As the

song says "bless them all, the long and the short and the tall".

Finally congratulations to Associate Professor Gillian Hallam who was conferred the distinction of Fellow in December. She has, in the opinion of the Board, reached an exceptionally high standard of proficiency in library and information science and has made a distinguished contribution to the theory and practice of library and information science. Well done Gillian.

Wishing you a joyful and productive 2008.



Portobello Library: Otago Peninsula



Glenorchy Library (near Queenstown)

