



Derek Whitehead  
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.

Email: [feedback@alia.org.au](mailto:feedback@alia.org.au) with your comments.

Derek Whitehead  
President  
03 9214 8333  
[derek.whitehead@alia.org.au](mailto:derek.whitehead@alia.org.au)

Jan Richards  
Vice-president  
03 6393 8126  
[jan.richards@alia.org.au](mailto:jan.richards@alia.org.au)

Michelle Brennand  
Director  
08 9405 5490  
[michelle.brennand@alia.org.au](mailto:michelle.brennand@alia.org.au)

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

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

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

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

## Like a parade of elephants – getting a summit on the road

Like organising a parade of elephants, it takes quite a while to get a summit organised and moving.



photo courtesy <http://www.flickr.com/photos/tidsromi/2182941588/>

Australian libraries have a history of summits – in 2004 Eric Wainwright wrote in ALJ about the original and grandest summit of all, the Australian Libraries Summit of 1988. It gave rise to other summits – Towards Federation 2001 (held in March 1992), the National Interlending and Document Delivery Summit (in May 1995) and most recently of all, the ALIA Education and Workforce Summit (in March 2008). Now a Public Libraries Summit is contemplated for early 2009.

When you call something a summit, however, you create expectations. All of the big names, power people, and decision makers will be there. They will be able to agree, and what they agree on will be done, because they have the power to bring it about. A summit, many imagine, will be followed by a program of agreed actions.

True? Alas, no. Like those elephants, many things in the library world are hard to move along and turn around, whoever is attempting to do it. But we are moving.

The ALIA Education and Workforce Summit was held on 30 March, and has been documented, at least in outline, at <http://www.alia.org.au/education/summit08/>. We got it on the road, but the parade is not finished – we need to implement what the summit agreed on. So what next?

The summit came up with a lot of things for us to do. It all involves a great deal of work, but then we expected that. We expect that this will be the task of ALIA – that means ALIA members, Board, groups, committees and staff – but there is also a major responsibility for library employers and library educators, and for other organisations involved in our industry too, such as employment agency and trainers. Here are the main directions it set, for those of you following the parade.

- We need to recruit more good people to work in libraries and information, and there were lots of ideas about recruiting to the library sector. Many things are already being done. We will do some more work

on taking a systematic approach, and in the meantime work with employers and educators on this. We had a very useful discussion at the Peak Bodies Forum in May on collaborating in recruitment activities.

- There was enthusiasm for employers and educators getting together, and ALIA will facilitate that. They are the two sides of the recruitment elephant – qualifications and jobs – and the two must work together. We will be creating a forum for discussion and collaboration.
- Everyone agreed that the ALIA course recognition process is important. This is the process by which ALIA regularly assesses courses in library and information studies and determines whether they meet our criteria for professional recognition. However, the summit also agreed that the process should be reviewed; for example, courses only need to be reviewed every seven years – is that frequent enough? We plan to review the process.
- There was a lot of discussion about defining the library and information profession. You might ask – what's new about that? There is ALWAYS a discussion around this topic going on somewhere. However, this time we will do something about it, and Helen Partridge (a Board member and QUT senior lecturer) has agreed to lead the process.
- Professional development (PD) has been a feature of ALIA programs since the programs were developed this decade, but uptake by ALIA members has been low. We intend to make PD the major focus in the 2008 National Advisory Congress, which is a series of local meetings around Australia, mainly in July.
- Finally, we agreed that it would be a good idea for higher education educators to get together, and Damian Lodge, another Board member (from Charles Sturt University) has agreed to convene that. Current plans are for a teleconference initially, and an in person meeting linked to RAILS in January 2009.

The Education and Workforce Summit was an upbeat affair. There is a lot going on, especially in promoting a career in libraries, but we need to do more. Things like having a presence at career fairs, offering more work experience, creating cadetships, and promoting ourselves more effectively.

Lots to do and we welcome your further input on education and workforce issues, especially that critical issue of recruitment.