

Directline

I had the opportunity to be invited by the Department of Broadband, Communication and the Digital Economy last December to represent ALIA at the **Realising our Broadband Future Forum** held in Sydney. It was an important event for library-related advocacy. Representatives from the ministry, government departments, both federal and state, IT & ISP companies, and individual stakeholders attended.

Attendees from the LIS sector included Jan Fullerton, who chaired the first session of the e-community stream, Frank McGuire, library advocate and speaker on the Hume Global Learning Community, Ellen Forsyth, State Library of NSW, and James Leech, State Library of Queensland far-north Indigenous Knowledge Centres. You can listen to the streams, including library comments during the e-Community section: <http://www.broadbandfuture.gov.au/>

Kate Lundy was an obvious supporter of libraries and her tweet (**#bbfuture**) at the end of the first day "There will always be a need and place for excellent public access points to the internet. Public Libraries: it is your time!" was a great comment. In the context of the draft National Framework for Public Libraries which ALIA will be completing in the first months of 2010, this forum and the comments and outcomes from it will be important. There were many discussions on the significance of the broadband network being a 'nation building' project. One of the stories I will remember was from Clare Martin, CEO of ACOSS (who also talked about her own connected 'Broadband Family') about the affordable and accessible broadband future, especially for the 2 million low-income Australians "I would like to introduce you to Bill. In his early 50s and unemployed for the past 3 years, he earns \$275 per week (receiving newstart and rent assistance) but after rent has about \$55 for everything else in his life - Where in Bill's life will broadband fit? Helen is a student and single parent (receiving single-parent allowance and assistance and some child support), she earns \$488 per week and finds it challenging to keep up with her broadband and computer costs. How will people like this be part of, and afford, this exciting future?"



Ellen Forsyth, Kate Lundy, Sue Hutley and James Leech at the Realising our Broadband Future Forum

Internet Filtering

Interestingly, just a few days after the Broadband Future forum, Minister Conroy finally announced the government's decision on ISP filtering. ALIA released an initial media release with further work by the Executive Director and the ALIA Online Content Advisory Committee to commence in 2010. ALIA will also be conducting another internet access in public

libraries report and will again be calling on the support of PLA, State Public Library Associations, and all public library staff to complete this survey. ALIA, on behalf of its members and the Australian library community, will be making a submission to the review of accountability and transparency for Refused Classification material by 12 February 2010.

Memorandums of Understanding

ALIA has a range of agreements with other associations and organisations. We recently signed an MOU with Friends of Libraries Australia (FOLA) and the Australian Law Libraries Association (ALLA). We look forward to collaborating more with these organisations. We are also updating our agreements with AGLIN, ASA, SLA, and COLT. <http://www.alia.org.au/governance/affiliation.html>



Daniel Ferguson (FOLA), Jan Richards, and Sue Hutley sign the MOU

National Office staffing restructure

2009 has seen many National Office staff re-evaluate personal priorities and move on to other things. As most NO positions are administrative, ALIA, like other not-for-profits and small businesses compete in a very difficult talent market due to the high salaries and benefits of the public service. This is one of the identified sector issues in the Productivity Commission's report into the not-for-profit sector.

The Board of Directors has also re-focused on the priorities for the next few years as part of the Planning 2010-2015 exercise, with more information available on the web in February at <http://www.alia.org.au/governance/planning/> for all members to view. These future directions have also informed plans for the staffing of the National Office. With all this in mind, a new management structure for National Office has been approved and will be implemented during 2010. Results of the survey of members in 2008 and statistics throughout 2009 have indicated a decline in the number of industrial relations enquiries. Heather Nash, ALIA's Industrial Relations Advisor has accepted a redundancy. The IR service will be co-ordinated (in the first instance) by the Executive Director, and will be outsourced to legal experts, so members get the best, most-targeted advice possible.

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