



THE FUTURE IS IN YOUR HANDS

It's probably appropriate the theme of this issue of *inCite* is 'connections'. I'm writing this column as floodwaters to the south and north of me take their personal, environmental and economic tolls on a great number of communities. You see, I'm currently

'stranded' on the Sunshine Coast as I wait for floodwaters north of Cooroy and south of Rockhampton to recede. Literally, as I put finger on key Brisbane and Ipswich are being devastated by floodwaters. The network of rivers and streams and the imposition of road, rail, and communication systems around, over and along these natural arteries demonstrate the reliance we have on being connected to our local, national and international communities.

As I sit here in my borrowed office I've been contacted by colleagues and friends from across the nation and from overseas. One of the great things about the library and information world is the extent to which personal connections and relationships are formed and how they are sustained. During my career in the academic sector and my role as Director of CQUniversity Library I have formed an extensive network of colleagues. I think it's safe to say that this network has certainly expanded since I've become actively involved in ALIA at a national level.

While I knew a few people before from different sectors through personal contacts I've had the opportunity to meet people from many of the LIS sectors all over the country through my travels, by correspondence and on the phone. I've written before about the 'broad church' that is ALIA and my conversations and discussions with members has certainly reinforced this view. Regardless of their sector and their perspective on certain issues nearly every member I've met has generally been positive about ALIA. Of course, there has been a few people who are less than happy with

some things ALIA is doing and the direction it is taking. Regardless of whether members have positive or negative views and experiences, it's important for me as President and for other Board members to take heed and to feed it all into the decision-making and operational mix.

One of the great things about being President and meeting and connecting with fellow ALIAns, is seeing how our members achieve. I've had the privilege of presenting a HCL Anderson Award and will be presenting two Fellowship awards before my term is up. However, I'd have to say, and with no disrespect to Jan, Anslie and Andrew, that my greatest pleasure is seeing younger members and members who normally aren't recognised achieve in any number of ways – publications, conference and seminar presentations, and clever initiatives.

While all Board Members of ALIA have an obligation to connect with members, members should take the opportunity to connect with Board Members as the opportunity or need arises. They are YOUR directors so it's important for them to be aware of members' issues and concerns.

As I come to the end of this issue's column I've just checked my email and read reports about the impact of the floods on staff at universities and libraries in South East Queensland – closures, flash flooding, preparing homes for the worst. At times like this and regardless of the type of natural disaster, it's important that we all stay connected as a library community to offer support in any way we can.

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YOUR INDUSTRY SNAPSHOT

Cybersafety Help Button launched

Launched in December, the Australian Government's Cybersafety Help Button is a free application for personal, school and library computers. It provides internet users, particularly children and young people, with easy online access to cybersafety information and assistance risks including cyberbullying, unwanted contact, scams and fraud, and offensive or inappropriate material. The button can be downloaded at www.dbcde.gov.au/helpbutton. And at www.cybersmart.gov.au/Libraries.aspx, you can also find a selection of posters and bookmarks available from the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy. There is also a multiple installer to download the button onto your library network.

US library funding unchanged in 2011

The US House of Representatives continued funding of their federal library grant program at US\$232m for 2011, the same as for 2010. That means no cuts, but it also means fewer American public libraries will be shouldering increased demand this year because of closures in 2010.

Library Perceptions

OCLC's newest membership report, *Perceptions of Libraries, 2010* (sequel to the 2005 *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources*) is now available as a free download. The new report provides updated information and new insights into information consumers and their online habits, preferences, and perceptions. Particular attention was paid to how the current economic downturn has affected the information-seeking behaviours and how those changes are reflected in the use and perception of libraries. www.oclc.org/reports/2010perceptions.htm

78km of knowledge in one place

Innovation Minister, Senator Kim Carr opened controlled environment storage and access facility that is the second stage of the CAVAL Archival and Research Materials Centre (CARM) in December. The facility brings together some seven million research volumes and artefacts, to live in optimum conditions in a library fourteen times larger than Egypt's legendary Great Library of Alexandria.