



OUR BROAD CHURCH

ALIA is a member-based organisation which exists to serve and advance the interests of its members. To quote our immediate past President Graham Black, "ALIA is a broad church".

As a profession we work in a wide variety of roles in a variety of organisations and this is reflected in our membership, interests and priorities. This is an amazing strength, but also presents challenges to the Association.

We have around 6000 members, yet many more people benefit from the work of ALIA and many of our services, including employment lists and ALIA events, are open and accessible to all within the profession. The extent of support for non-members is an active discussion within the Board as we want to ensure this doesn't occur at the expense of the members who financially sustain ALIA.

Our Strategic Plan includes a significant growth target for our membership base and this is important to ensure a strong and sustainable profession in future years. Most of us place great value in a word of mouth recommendation from someone that we trust. So, I would encourage all members to provide that recommendation to our colleagues and advocate on behalf of ALIA.

If it helps, then I'll share some of the reasons I given when I'm asked – why be an ALIA member?

There are of course many direct benefits, including quality professional development opportunities such as conferences and training, discussion and debate, professional journals and publications, the continuing professional development scheme, and copyright and other advice. ALIA also sets the standards for professional education and monitors these through accreditation

services to ensure that the tertiary education undertaken to become a librarian or information professional meets those standards. Standards are vitally important to retaining our professional credibility.

ALIA advocates on behalf of and for the whole profession across a wide variety of issues, across all levels of government and with the private sector too. The list of recent submissions to government enquiries, participation in Committees and presentations at hearings is long and varied, ranging from social inclusion, disaster recovery, The Book Industry Strategy Group, cybersafety, school libraries and the national broadband network to name just a few. You can always find a full list of advocacy activities and submissions on the ALIA website. Recent, very visible, successes from ALIA's lobbying efforts include securing substantial funding from the Federal Government for National Year of Reading and The Library Initiative.

For me personally, though, whilst I appreciate all of the personal benefits and actions on my behalf, membership is as much about the sense of profession that comes from being part of an active, vibrant and community of like-minded people and having a recognised professional body which represents my interests.

But, it's not only about what ALIA can give to me, it's about what I can give back to my profession and my professional colleagues to enhance our skills, abilities, knowledge, community standing, funding and credibility. I would also add that, importantly, ALIA gives me a voice on issues that I don't necessarily have in my day job.

I wouldn't leave home without my ALIA membership.

Margaret Allen

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YOUR INDUSTRY SNAPSHOT

ABR online

The *Australian Book Review* is now also available online with content-enhancement. Libraries that subscribe to *ABR OE* (as in *Online Edition*) can access back issues, search articles and enjoy reader discussions in realtime. Free trials are available on request. www.australianbookreview.com.au

Two new publications from IFLA

Subject Access: Preparing for the Future contains the proceedings of the August 2009 conference in Florence, covering theoretical and methodological aspects of rethinking semantic access to information and knowledge. *Global Perspectives on School Libraries: Projects and Practices* focuses on fostering the school librarian's professional development for school library enhancement (also available as eBooks).

Tracking public library patrons

In the US, *Library Journal* and Bowker have joined forces to launch *Patron Profiles*, a quarterly survey of 1,500

individual library users from eight regions across the USA about their experiences and expectations regarding what LJ and Bowker call "the big questions and trends in libraries", placed in the context of broader consumer behaviour. For the 2011-2012 survey that means a focus on digital and new reading technologies. The premier issue of *Patron Profiles* will be available online in October. www.patronprofiles.com. And in Australia? Anyone?

Save Our Libraries

Many members will have heard of the campaign launched to save funding for Victoria's public libraries. ALIA is strongly supporting the public campaign being coordinated by the Municipal Association of Victoria, along with Public Libraries Australia and councils across the state. You can join the campaign via www.facebook.com/stoplibrarycuts and find more information about it at www.mav.asn.au/saveourlibraries.