

For the December issue, our President and Executive Director have combined their columns to give readers a taste of what's in store for the Association in the next 12 months.

2013 – A YEAR OF RENEWAL

In 2010, the CEO of Google blew everyone away when he told an audience that we now produce as much information every two days as we did in the whole period from the dawn of time to 2003.

Not so long ago, library and information professionals were the go-to people who had a magical way of finding information that was a mystery to outsiders. Now, most people have access to this enormous mass of information and they want to explore it for themselves. This makes a huge difference to our role and how we interact with our users. It means we become guides and facilitators rather than guardians; it means we can come out from behind the desk; it means we can use a variety of media and we can be more connected with our communities.

Our members are coming to grips with this brave new world, and it's only right that the Association should make some significant changes so that we continue to be a vital part of the

profession. For 2013, we have an exciting renewal plan, to refresh and reinvigorate the Association, to reflect the opportunities and challenges facing our members.

Re-engaging with people

The first thing we need to do is to re-engage with members and potential members. Back in the 1990s, for sound financial reasons, activities were centred on an office in Canberra, ALIA House. While this achieved the objective of reducing costs and rationalising administration, over time it has meant that members in the different states and territories have felt less connected. It has also meant that people have seen ALIA House as 'head office', rather than as a support centre for members.

We need to revive the feeling of togetherness that is the reason we join Associations in the first place. To help this along, we have identified three goals:

- We want members to feel a positive emotional connection with their Association

- We want members to know that their Association supports and endorses what they believe in
- We want members to know that their Association is well run and provides good value

Our keywords are 'open, inclusive, collaborative, and member-focused'.

While library and information professionals will always be at the core of the Association, we also need to ensure that we are relevant and attractive to others who work in LIS environments – people with a systems background, events organisers, marketing and communications specialists, people whose skill is customer service. We will be developing new activities and initiatives to provide greater support for these members in 2013.

Our state and territory managers will continue to be active across Australia and we are recruiting a new manager for ACT, to complete our coverage. We believe that what happens locally is equally as important to the Association as the activities initiated through ALIA House.

We will also be focusing on our approach to ALIA groups. Groups are the lifeblood of the Association, and we will be making it easier for people to get together, applying a lighter touch to the guidelines which currently operate.

Improving the member experience

From November 2012, we have introduced a 12-month rolling membership, in place of the fixed July to June membership year. Instead of people joining for just a couple of months if they sign up in April, and then having to renew at the end of June, new memberships will run for a full year. We will also be simplifying membership categories and making it easier to join and renew memberships online.

This will lead on to a membership campaign from February to May, encouraging new and lapsed members to come on board with the Association. There is no doubt that together we are stronger and, in these challenging times, we need critical mass to give us a strong voice with policy and decision makers.

Qualifications and professional development

We will be undertaking a complete review of our course accreditation in the first half of 2013. This review will be in consultation with our university and RTO partners. The aim is to make course accreditation less onerous for educators and less resource hungry for ALIA, while continuing to provide robust quality assurance for students and employers.

As part of our professional development scheme, we are currently running a pilot project, which could lead to a new level of membership, enabling





employers to see the unique skills of library and information professionals aligned with different sectors. Our working title is Certified Professional and our pilot is with health libraries. We will have feedback from the trial in the first quarter of 2013 to share with members.

We have reviewed our core skills and knowledge, with valuable input from a variety of stakeholders. We will be using these as the basis for an advocacy campaign in 2013 to raise public awareness of the value of library and information professionals.

Advocacy

We need to be on the front foot with advocacy, planning ahead of time and having the facts at our fingertips.

We will be doing more work on library

metrics in 2013. We will be working with partners to produce reports on specific sectors, similar to the impact study we published in partnership with Health Libraries Inc last month for health libraries. We will also be developing marketing collateral for members, including new posters promoting the skills of library and information professionals.

Special projects

The board has initiated two special projects which will involve think tanks, summits, major reports, and lobbying and advocacy activities. These are the Future of the Profession and E-books and E-lending.

We are planning to publish a report on the current state of Australian libraries and the library and information profession, based on feedback from advisory committees, discussion at our annual roundtable gathering of Associations, our own and others' published data.

We will also be looking at ALIA's international presence – how we engage with IFLA, with our near neighbours, and with colleagues right across the globe.

Website

Members can look forward to a new website, which will be more intuitive and easier to navigate. We are aiming for a lively home page and informative and engaging content, as well as a library of useful resources. The new website will be available to preview in February 2013.

Publications

From 1 January, our ALIA journals *Australian Library Journal* and *Australian Academic and Research Libraries* will be published by Taylor & Francis under its Routledge imprint. This will provide a number of practical benefits, including bringing

Australian LIS research to a wider international audience.

From 6 February, we will be publishing a new weekly e-newsletter, which will replace aliaNEWS, giving our members the latest intelligence, insight, and stories every Wednesday, instead of at the end of each month.

While our newsletters will go from 12 per annum to 48, we will be merging the June/July and November/December issues of INCITE. This will mean nine issues each year, instead of 11, but the size will no longer be capped at 32 pages and we are planning high profile interviews and other interesting editorial angles to further entice readers.

This will introduce new opportunities for vendors and partners, and we will be creating attractive promotional packages across a range of activities, events, and media, including our new website.

Conferences

As the major national Association, we are committed to a major national conference every year, but we realise that delegates need the content to be specific to their areas of expertise. For the 2014 conference, we will look at program streams for different sectors, including a stream where papers are peer reviewed. There will be something for library leaders and practitioners, and we are seeking to achieve a greater sense of involvement and connection for vendors.

Governance

We will be carrying out a review of our constitution, by-laws, and committee structure during 2013, to ensure that these meet the needs of the Association going forward.

Launching at Information Online

Some of these changes are already taking place, but if you'd like the full picture, come along to Information Online, in Brisbane, from 12 to 15 February, where we will be launching the renewed, reinvigorated ALIA, including an update of the ALIA logo. Our logo will still be based on the ALIA star, but our designer has created a stylish and contemporary version, softening the hard edges, opening up the text, and using a warmer, fresher colour palette.

Hope to see you there.

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