



Dr Kerry Smith

# FILLING IN THE GAPS

The theme for this month's INCITE – 'Collections: Opening up access to historic collections and curation in a multimedia world' – led DR KERRY SMITH to think about its intent. While ALIA exists in a multimedia world, some people cannot profess to being true participants in it. Many times when Kerry switches on her computer, it seems to her as if there is a new gizmo to try, and she often doesn't bother. However, with the assistance of some members of the ALIA Retirees group, she and the others will open up historic collections of a different kind: by filling in the gaps for the ALIA Honours Board on the ALIA website at [bit.ly/1NIF4Ho](http://bit.ly/1NIF4Ho). But will the multimedia world and digital environment provide the missing information? In most cases, the answer will be no.


As Sue McKerracher, CEO of ALIA, wrote in the March 2015 issue of INCITE:


In January we added a new feature to our website, the ALIA Honours Board, to celebrate the contribution of nearly 200 outstanding individuals over the course of the Association's 77-year history.

The ALIA Retirees group was very pleased to know that this had happened. But without some coordination, the project could get out of hand. For example, someone might wade through lots of old ALJs, INCITEs and other sources to gather sufficient information to make a recommendation, only to be pipped by another keen researcher who has done something similar. I offered to coordinate the project, an offer that was accepted by ALIA.

Perhaps some of the missing citations will be hidden in the ALIA archives: a treat in store for a volunteer member or two living near the ALIA Head Office, to organise and index? The archives are there: I saw them myself when I last visited Canberra, but it is too far for me to pay occasional visits to assist. I am so pleased that all those years ago I purchased the three-volume work *ALIAS, Australia's Library, Information and Archives Services: An encyclopaedia of practice and practitioners*. These contain a wealth of information and wonderful photos of some of the missing people. Another gem is Géza Kósa's *Who's Who in Australian Libraries* with the latest edition dated 1990. I guess in those days the membership of the profession and its professional body was manageable enough to produce such volumes. Not so now,

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*Filling in the gaps for the ALIA Honours Board could extend right back to the foundation of the organisation. ALIA was founded 78 years ago. This photo is of the first meeting at the Albert Hall in Canberra on 20 and 21 August 1937. We have been proudly representing the Australian library and information sector as the peak body for professionals, staff, institutions, vendors, educators and other stakeholders since then. Through the Honours Board, ALIA is looking forward to celebrating the achievements of all those who have worked over the years to make our association dynamic and successful.*

as no one has continued this endeavour, nor other directories such as the Directory of Special Libraries in Australia (affectionately known as DASL) then produced by members of the ALIA Special Libraries Section.

It has been suggested that details of recent achievements and information on the recipients be updated on the ALIA Honours Board. However, the Honours Board reflects the information on the person receiving the honour at that point in time and why they received it. It is in effect a snapshot in time and not a biographical dictionary. Currently it is thought that the only changes made to existing entries would be to note if the person is deceased, and to add external honours received if they relate to the profession.


The history of ALIA and our profession is as important as its present and its future. The ALIA Retirees group ([alia.org.au/groups/alia-retirees](http://alia.org.au/groups/alia-retirees)) is part of that history and our central theme of 'Staying Connected' works well when professionals stay with ALIA after retirement. For example, our group in Western Australia is small, but we hope that with continued engagement, library visits and other activities, we will grow and thrive.

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