



The HARD YARDS

CELEBRATING OUR VOLUNTEERS

We have lots to celebrate in May each year, not least National Volunteer Week. This year, the theme was Give Happy, Live Happy, recognising that volunteering not only improves things for others but can also give back to the people who do the hard yards.

There are more than six million Australians who volunteer each year and as an association, ALIA is fortunate to have some 250 active volunteers at any point in time. Whether it's serving on our Board, running a Group, helping out with conferences and events, carrying out peer review or sitting on one of our editorial panels, everyone's contribution ensures the Association can provide the kind of quality services our Members seek.

For example, in July, we have the New Librarians' Symposium (NLS7) in Sydney, and in September the Library Technicians' Symposium in Hobart. Both events are run by ALIA volunteers, with support from the ALIA House team, and provide great opportunities for sections of our membership to network with each other, share information and learn about the things that are of special interest. These events couldn't happen without the organising committees and the Members who help out on the day.

THE DEVIL'S IN THE DETAIL

Also in May, the Treasurer handed down the Federal Budget (www.budget.gov.au). While there were no big surprises, there were plenty of items that related to library and information professionals. Amendments to the tax laws which would impose GST on digital imports, such as ebooks and other electronic resources need careful consideration. While a level playing field for Australian vendors has to be a good thing in principal, there will be implications for libraries – and library budgets – further down the track.

The withdrawal of a chunk of money from the Australia Council for the Arts will put pressure on existing programs and we don't yet have the detail of the new National Program for Excellence in the Arts, run by the Ministry for the Arts, which will provide a replacement.

We make great use of the information provided by the Australian Early Development Census to support early literacy investigations and submissions, but we don't yet know how the loss of \$4.6 million in funding will affect the agency's ability to generate valuable information.

The continuation of the National Collaborative Research Infrastructure, with \$150 million in 2016–2017, was a welcome recognition of the importance of evidence-based academic research. However, there are concerns that further science research funding took cash away from the Sustainable Research Excellence program, which helps fund libraries and research staff.

On a brighter note, we were pleased to see the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) gain an additional \$5 million to continue the preservation of non-digital documentary and AV materials in its collection.



SUE MCKERRACHER
ALIA CEO