

TAKING THE TEMPERATURE – RESULTS OF THE 2015 MEMBER SURVEY

Every few years, the ALIA Board and staff invite Members to complete a survey to provide feedback on how well the association is meeting your needs. Last year, 570 people across every state and territory responded, giving us insights into what you value, how well you feel supported, and what the Association could do to improve. Some interesting themes emerged around professional development, communication and the level of service you receive from your Association. You also raised issues such as ALIA's presence in regional areas and the importance of keeping services and activities affordable. Outgoing ALIA Director AILEEN WEIR reports.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (PD)

Nearly 40% of the Members who completed the survey were enrolled in the Professional Development Scheme, a steady improvement on the 2013 survey (33%) and the 2008 survey (22%). The factors you ranked most highly when considering the type of professional development to undertake were 'cutting-edge topics', 'refreshing existing skills' and 'affordability'. There were 305 who responded to the open question 'Which topics would you like covered?' with management and leadership skills, digital and technical skills, and topics that will position librarians for the careers of the future uppermost in your minds. From the Board's perspective, it was reassuring to see that many of these topics appear on the ALIA Training program and that 97% of respondents felt ALIA's commitment to professional development was either good or very good. Several people expressed views that participating in the PD Scheme should be compulsory and be given greater weight by employers.

COMMUNICATION

Many of you appreciate the various channels of communication ALIA uses to keep you informed about issues relevant to the profession, as indicated by the finding that 96% of respondents read *INCITE*. And many of them peruse every issue. The newsletters are also popular, with 94% reading *ALIA Weekly*, 66% reading *PD Postings* and 65% reading *RecruitLIS*. Our relatively new advocacy newsletter, *Freedom of Access to Information and Resources (FAIR)*, is also starting to attract a following, with 29% saying they read it regularly. The scholarly journals that ALIA publishes serve a different purpose and, unsurprisingly, attract a smaller readership than the current awareness newsletters; 30% indicate that they regularly read the *Australian Library Journal* and 14% read *Australian Academic and Research Libraries*. These percentages are consistent with the 2013 survey, when the two journals attracted a readership of 33% and 16% respectively. Overall, a pleasing 91% of respondents felt that the level of communication from ALIA was 'about right'.

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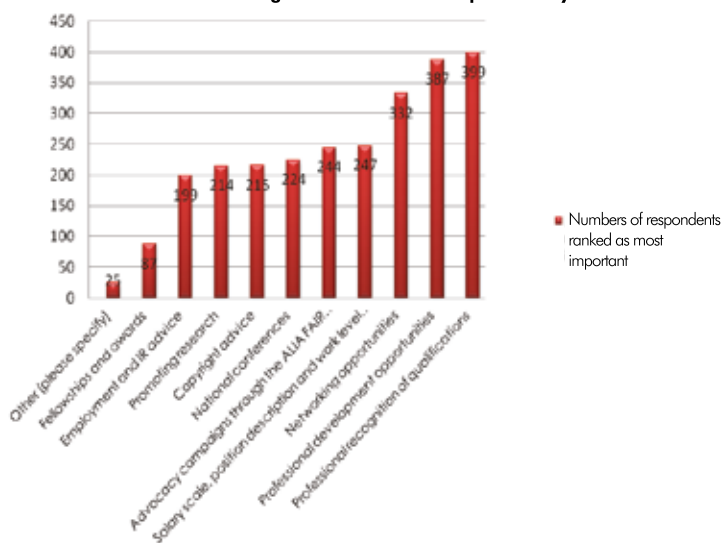


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CUSTOMER SERVICE

Almost three quarters of the respondents said they had contact with ALIA staff in 2015, up from 61% in 2013. Ninety-five percent said they were satisfied with the service they received; with a third indicating they were very satisfied. Comments associated with this question show considerable appreciation for the friendly and knowledgeable service provided by the state and territory managers and the team who work at ALIA House in Canberra.

Which of the following ALIA activities are important to you?



REASONS FOR MEMBERSHIP

The importance you place on ALIA's role in establishing and maintaining professional standards came through strongly, with 'professional recognition of qualifications' and 'professional development opportunities' appearing as the top-ranked activities with 'salary scale, position descriptions and work level guidelines' not far behind. ALIA's lobbying and advocacy campaigns and the many opportunities the association provides to network with colleagues are also highly valued. An item of concern to Members is affordability; with only 66% agreeing that membership provides value for money 'always' or 'almost always'. The financial pressures facing many library professionals also came through in the comments, with several mentioning that conference fees can be prohibitively expensive, particularly for those living outside the metropolitan areas. Despite these concerns, however, 91% would recommend to colleagues that they join ALIA.

The Board values the input from Members that the survey provides. Although there is always room for improvement, it is reassuring to see that much of the feedback endorses the priorities in the 2016–2020 strategic plan: advocacy, library education and standards, a robust Professional Development Scheme, and future-proofing both the association and the profession. The written comments remind the Board about the importance of keeping costs affordable, reaching and serving Members no matter where they live and helping our profession adapt to a rapidly evolving and 'disrupted' world. Thank you to all who took the time to express their views. 🌟

Overall performance

Several questions asked Members to rate ALIA's performance in a number of key areas. The results strongly endorse ALIA's performance against most criteria. Key findings:

Commitment to professional development – 97% good or very good

Copyright advice – 95% good or very good

Communication with members – 94% good or very good

Advocacy and lobbying – 92% good or very good

Providing opportunities to participate in special-interest groups – 89% good or very good

Promoting library and information research – 88% good or very good

Improving employment and career prospects – 87% good or very good

Employment and industrial relations advice – 76% good or very good



Safirotu Khoir, Library and Information Management PhD student.

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