

A new millenium, a new Association...



**Christine
Richardson**

ALIA Board of Directors

Welcome to the directory issue of *inCite* and to a new year of ALIA activities. This year will see some exciting developments in the evolution of ALIA with the establishment of the new self-nominating groups that will allow members to determine the direction they wish to go, and the activities they wish to participate in.

Having checked the meaning of 'directory' in the *Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary* I was interested to see various meanings listed including: 'a guide' the obvious one, and a 'body of directors'. This prompted me to reflect on the first few months of my participation on the new ALIA Board of Directors and what ALIA means to me.

At a personal level, ALIA has provided me with the opportunity to meet with colleagues from all areas and levels of the profession, and to share experience and knowledge. Moving from the Big Island to Tasmania in the early 1980s and seeking to re-enter the workforce after an eight-year absence, I found that the network I became part of through the local ALIA Branch invaluable to my career.

Along with many of my colleagues I was the victim of library closures in the first half of the 1990s, but being an active member of ALIA and known to many in the library community, I was never without employment. As library doors closed behind me I was able to move to other interesting positions, even if ultimately those doors closed too!

The CPD opportunities provided by ALIA branches and sections are always relevant to the changes happening in the profession. Having completed my initial qualification in the 1970s, the variety and pertinance of the CPD activities I have attended has allowed me to develop, along with the profession, from manual systems to the exciting world of fully-integrated library management systems and the internet. The range of topics covered in these activities never ceases to amaze me, including marketing and market research, developments in document delivery, electronic journals and indexes, and the more practical — using Dewey 21, AACR2, and designing web pages, to mention just a few.

ALIA conferences are a major opportunity to meet with colleagues and are a major source of knowledge and developments in the profession. However, to serve on an organising committee for a conference is one of the greatest CPD activities you can hope

for. The skills you acquire and develop have application in all areas of your life, not just professionally.

I was lucky enough to be on the committee that organised the 8th Asia Pacific Specials, Health and Law Librarians Conference in Hobart in 1999. While it was hard work, it was great fun and the rewards at the end were worth every sleepless night and panic attack! To be part of a successful conference where delegates were obviously appreciative of the program content, the trade displays and the opportunity to catch up with old friends and make new ones, is an experience that will stay with me for a long time.

The old adage — 'what you get out of life depends on what you put into it' is certainly true when it comes to involvement in professional associations. It is only by turning the question of 'what will ALIA do for me?' into 'what can I do for ALIA?', (unashamedly paraphrased from JFK) that the real benefits of belonging to the Association are realised. This does not only mean taking on the positions of office-bearers, but also by participating in activities and events that may be organised in your area.

The concept of self-nominating groups is an opportunity for every member to make a contribution to what ALIA is to become in their region or area of interest. Over the next few months members will be meeting to discuss what they want to happen in the new structure. They will decide what new groups will form, what old ones will continue. Now is the time for *you* to have your say and to help form an ALIA that is responsive to members' needs because members are directing the organisation.

The Board of Directors is part of the governance structure of the Association. It has the responsibility of responding to the needs and wishes of the members, ensuring the infrastructure is in place to allow ALIA to go forward into the 21st century as a vital, relevant and respected professional association. The first term of the Board has been a learning experience for all directors as we determine how best the Board can fulfil this role.

I am pleased that I have had the opportunity to be involved in the evolution of the 'new' ALIA, and I would urge everyone to participate in the discussions and developments over the next few months so that you, too, can enjoy the benefits that active participation can bring. ■

...I would urge everyone to participate in the discussions and developments over the next few months so that you, too, can enjoy the benefits that active participation can bring.
