

## Library always on school agenda

As a currently non-financial member, albeit one who plans to rejoin soon and who was always a member as a student, I would like to share my experiences of advocating for my library and show how important it has become for me to find the ability to re-join ALIA as soon as I am able.

I am a librarian of 17 years, with time in my career spent mainly in the public library sector where my experience has been that everyone is an active advocate and this certainly



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achieves wonderful community-based outcomes. Moving to a primary education setting in 2009, I have had to re-learn all there is to know about advocating, promoting, marketing and supporting a library service. My submission to the recent parliamentary inquiry into school librarianship has fired my enthusiasm and helped me to 'keep on keeping on' in an industry where library professionals are sometimes being forgotten or obliterated.

My very first Library Manager inspired me in the early years of my career. Anything was possible with hard work and justification. A very proactive Local Government also allowed the library services that were (and still are) delivered to be funded, meaningful, community-focussed and properly evaluated.

Later in my career, I have been fortunate enough to also work for one of the youngest Library Managers in NSW and I believe the passion that she has given me, the entire staff, and the community has been a wonderful example of advocacy working well. People who 'get it' about libraries are their best advertisement.

In my current position, I have attempted to re-ignite the passion for the school library. Although its importance is always there, simmering away, I feel that a strong Teacher Librarian presence is essential to really have the library as the hub of the school. We need to continually find ways to serve all our 'customers' – the staff, the parents, the students, the future students.

I try to be very visual to the students and staff, constantly sharing and talking about books, online resources, technology and information. Keeping reading and lifelong learning on the agenda in the school is the way that I have been able to advocate for why this library service is important.

Our library blog, moving to an informative web based library management system, school newsletter articles and forming strong networks with our local public library has enabled my school library to be 'seen' and 'heard'. The new BER investment in our library will change it dramatically, both aesthetically and in the way it will provide meaningful resources for all of the school.

By constantly talking about the library, I am advocating for its survival. Having a strong, supportive leadership is another aid to advocacy in a primary school setting. Although much of my time is spent teaching; my role as the LIS professional is valued by my Principal. The way I represent the library has meant

that the physical building is on the agenda, but so too are the unseen things that the library can provide.

I have printed off and used the *Every Member An Advocate* kit provided by ALIA. The quotes are on the wall by my workspace and I use them often. Libraries are a lifeline.

As long as I am able to, I will continue to advocate for the library where I work. I am in a wonderful position now where I work occasionally in a public library and often in a school library. I will continue to try to be a part of the push for outcomes and promotion of what we can do together if we try.

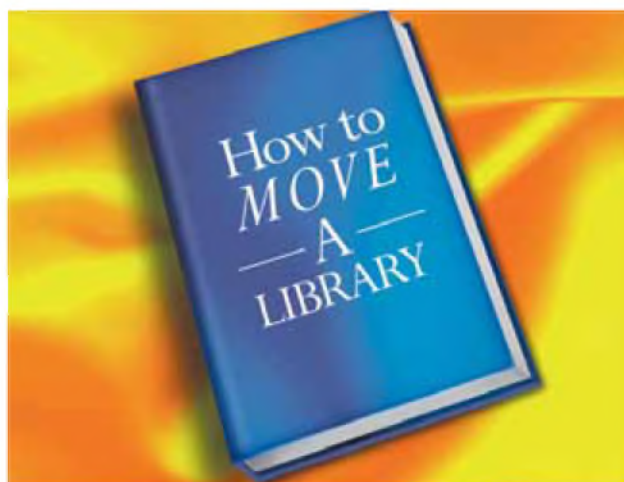
It is a long haul but it is worth the passion. I urge ALIA to run the *Every Member An Advocate* workshop again as I was unable to make the Sydney one. This is where we can unite and advocate for the future of funding of library services and library staff and all that they provide.

Thank you so much for the opportunity to have a say. I do hope to be in a position to re-join ALIA soon.

**Kim White**

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[Editor: The *Every Member an Advocate* kit has been made freely available online as part of ALIA's commitment to leadership for the profession. However, the Association's voice can really only be as strong as our membership and we look forward to welcoming you back Kim when you will have access to many more resources only available to members].



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