

ALIA: Your voice for 75 years

The Australian Library and Information Association is 75 years old this year. Despite the steady decline in professional association memberships internationally in recent years, ALIA has been celebrating a steady, if small, growth in membership – evidence that we, as library and information professionals, understand the critical role and value of our combined voice.

Not unusually, ALIA has gone through various changes of name over 75 years, from inception as the Australian Institute of Librarians in 1937, becoming the Library Association of Australia in 1949, and on through the (then) agonising debate over inclusion of the word 'information' in the 1980s (we finally adopted our current name in 1989).

The Association has always striven to cover the big picture as well as the local minutiae of daily professional activity. Education for a future that includes unknown technologies, resources, and needs has always been important cornerstone of ALIA's vision. Taking an active role on the world stage has always been important too – Australians were at the very first meeting of the International Federation of Library Associations in 1927 and many high profile members of ALIA have graced the committees and governance of the Federation since then.

Looking back is important, to remind ourselves where we came from. But more, in this 75th year, it is timely to remember what we are here for. It has never been more important to join together to advocate for our sector, not just because of funding pressures and staffing issues, but because you and I, as members of the Australian Library and Information Association have a very specific responsibility on behalf of our communities and our profession.

ALIA is one of over 50 bodies representing the sector but it's the only one charged with acting as the peak body, with national and international scope. Over the last seven decades this has meant embracing change to ensure the sustainability of what we hold dear – our core values.

Do you remember what you signed up for when you joined ALIA, and why? Our core values start out with protecting the free flow of information through open access to recorded knowledge, information and creative works. We are committed to connecting people to ideas, to literacy and to learning. Whatever you did at work today, whatever you do next week, this is what our profession, through our professional association, is all about (if you want to refresh your memory, our core values are listed on the back cover of this issue). These core values underpin why we do what we do (and why we love it).

And ALIA is our voice to achieve it. Happy Anniversary, one and all.

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75th
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50th Anniversary Library Association of Australia 1987

ALIA VICTORIA STATE MANAGER, MARGIE ANDERSON, COUNTS HER COMMEMORATIVE ALIA 50TH ANNIVERSARY ENVELOPE AMONG HER MOST PRECIOUS POSSESSIONS.

Win!

To celebrate ALIA's 75th anniversary and the National Year of Reading in 2012, we have five precious prizes – signed copies by National Year of Reading supporting authors Morris Gleitzman, Laura Buzo, Rod Moss, and Boori Monty Pryor and Jan Ormerod – to give away.

How do you get your hands on one of these special additions to your collection? Simple. In the spirit of New Year resolutions to be organised, we're asking you to find your favourite ALIA memorabilia. Have you got a poster, postcard, mug, or conference giveaway stashed on a shelf? Take a pic (minimum 300dpi resolution please) and send it in to incite@alia.org.au with the details of what it is and where and when you obtained it, by March 30, 2012. We will be awarding prizes for the oldest, funniest, and funkiest mementos of happy days with your colleagues. Winners will be announced in the May INCITE to celebrate Library Information Week. *(Please note: the judging process will be conducted by ALIA's National Office staff and even though it will probably be entirely subjective, no correspondence will be entered into.)*