



Staying relevant

The theme of this issue of *INCITE* is the education of the industry - but forgive me if I start here by heading off on a bit of a tangent.

Library and Information Week and National Simultaneous Story Time were massive campaigns in May.

The stats were impressive (watch out for our comprehensive

wrap-up in *INCITE* in September) and, as usual, these campaigns generated enormous amounts of coverage for libraries and information services this year. There is no question that NSS in particular is one of our most powerful vehicles to promote our services in regional areas, achieving literally thousands of pages of coverage and significant goodwill.

My thanks go to all the libraries and information services, and to the schools, hospitals, pre-schools and more that made this week such a positive week for the profession.

Many of the questions asked by the media dealt with the relevance of 'libraries' as the world becomes more 'e' oriented. This question is relevant but there is another significant issue too, and that is what is the relevance of skilled professionals in this 'e' world?

The consistent message ALIA provides is that our profession is a service industry that manages information to deliver a usable result for our patrons and clients. That group of users is just as diverse as those you see at a hardware store, cinema or doctor's surgery. But unlike those general purpose businesses, the business of our profession is often highly specialised. There has always been a core set of skills and knowledge employed by an information management professional within legal, health, government, public library or any other of the numerous sectors in which our members are employed. Each of these sectors however, has areas of specialisation and general business skills that need to be provided through a complex combination of education and continuing professional development.

The education programs for library and information service professionals are currently undergoing radical review. The revised Innovation and Business Skills Australia (IBSA) Library, Information and Cultural Services Training Package (CUL11) and the Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) Report were two major bodies of work in 2011 that are set to significantly alter the education landscape for the profession.

ALIA staff invested considerable time as part of the IBSA review to ensure the retention of core skills in the final package. We will continue to work with educators and employers to ensure the value of ALIA accreditation during this period of rapid change.

While education attainment reflects a level of knowledge and skills at a particular point in time, it is ongoing professional development that employers increasingly look to in recruitment and promotion decisions. They see professional development as a combination of on-the-job experiences and external experiences for which the employee takes responsibility.

The ALIA Professional Development Scheme is the ideal tool to manage and record this activity. Over 200 members have joined the scheme over the last year and we continue to review the scheme to ensure its relevance is maintained.

If you are a professional member of ALIA and not a member of the Professional Development Scheme I urge you to consider joining to give yourself the appropriate recognition and competitive edge.

As I write this, your ALIA membership renewal letter is on its way to you. Your investment in your professional association enables ALIA to provide you with a wide range of benefits. Some are featured in this issue of *INCITE*, such as the strength of advocacy for professional education at a national level, and career development opportunities such as the Professional Development Scheme, ALIA Training and the Biennial Conference - resources and services that can help you grow in your profession and career.

ALIA continues to be your voice and to partner with all our members in your professional development.

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ALIA SNAPSHOT

Did you know if you join the ALIA ePortfolio Practice Group, you can apply for an ALIA-supported 12 month trial of the e-portfolio platform PebblePad? The ALIA ePortfolio Practice Group provides ALIA members with support and information on using e-portfolios within the profession. Joining this group can help you establish an e-portfolio and align your e-portfolios with formal and informal learning, professional development and long term work goals.

Join the ALIA ePortfolio Practice Group at www.alia.org.au/groups/ePort/. Register your interest in a PebblePad account by emailing margie.anderson@alia.org.au.