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This month's *inCite* theme is 'marketing' and I have been wondering how the topic can be related to ALIA members at work.

If we start by consulting the dictionary we find: '*Market v: to deal in a market, to sell goods*'. In what are librarians dealing, in what market and what are the goods they have to sell? Rather obviously, librarians are dealing in service provision; their operational framework is the labour market and what they have to sell is their expertise. With both service delivery and the labour market increasingly dynamic, the often radical changes which result are threatening to many of us and clearly the trend is strengthening. So in facing this challenging environment, is there a role for 'marketing' of librarians and their services? The answer must be a resounding 'yes'.

Automatic salary movements resulting from National Wage and whole-of-industry wage cases are gone. So too are the days of static organisational structures, where only occasional fine tuning disturbed long established patterns for the division of labour and allocation of tasks. Now we live with increasingly fluid job descriptions, matrix-based work allocation and an organisation chart which changes with alarming regularity. 'Downsizing', 'Outsourcing' and 'Competitive Tendering'—to name but three of contemporary management's plethora of buzzwords—add to 'The End of Certainty'.

In this climate, librarians must work for retention of their function even before they seek recognition of its monetary value under the newer productivity based wage fixing arrangements which are gathering pace in Australia. Both demand forceful self promotion; both call for acceptance of the reality of the business environment now upon us. This is the essence

of 'marketing'. It means that, while much of the rhetoric surrounding current business and labour market dogma lacks an empirical base and should be aggressively challenged, librarians will serve their own interests best by vigorously embracing change rather than denying the need for it. Librarians must try to show themselves as the people best equipped for a central role in providing contemporary information services in Australian organisations. Attempts to resist change and retain only existing roles are certain to fail and may even result in no role at all.

Librarians need to demonstrate the value of their services to their organisations. In doing so, they should be advocating a definition of value and productivity which goes beyond only product outputs and cost cutting. In the area of efficiency measurement, as in the labour market generally, there is indeed what economist Judith Sloan has called a continuing 'contest for the ownership of words'. Many employers and even some trade unions have embraced a view of efficiency and productivity improvement which is little more than cost minimisation: this involves concentration on immediate bottom line cuts and at best achieves relatively short term gains, almost exclusively for management. An alternative and, many would argue, more potentially valuable course is what has been seen as the 'productivity enhancement' approach. Here, a much longer term strategy is involved and sees organisational change and enterprise bargaining as a framework for continuous improvement in all aspects of business operations and service delivery. It is through this latter course that librarians and other groups whose product is service rather than more

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tangible outputs can best protect their interests as organisations adopt new practices.

There is a sizeable body of useful literature on identifying value in library and information services on which librarians can base submissions to management- and the emphasis here is on making *submissions* rather than waiting to be asked for *responses*. The work of Dr Marianne Broadbent, among others, provides a particularly helpful resource for this purpose. If by making use of such material, librarians are able to convince their management that library and information services are making a major contribution to core business they will be well placed to argue first for retention, even enhancement, of the service and, second, for equitable pay outcomes based on performance.

Among many concerns about Australia's new industrial relations system is a seeming reduction in its equity focus. Traditionally, comparative wage justice concepts allied to the public interest powers of the industrial tribunals have ensured at least a measure of commonality across different industrial groups through the award system. In this way, even the industrially weakest employees received at least a proportion of advances gained by more fortunate groups. Now this protection has largely gone.

In a productivity driven system it will be vital to achieve distribution of the benefits of improved productivity on an across-organisation basis so that all groups gain a fair share. And development of clear indicators of value, service standards, customer satisfaction and, especially, contribution to core business achievements will be central to that goal. For librarians this should be the core of their personal marketing strategies. ■