

# Support for a single, peak body

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## Conclusions of the *Strategic review of library co-ordination and representation report*

The overwhelming support from within the library and information services sector is for a single peak body. Given the enormous amount of goodwill expressed across Australia for such a body, this goal should be pursued as quickly as possible.

...In these circumstances, it is recommended that ALIA and ACLIS should immediately commence discussions for the purpose of merging the two organisations at the earliest possible time.

While a merger of the two bodies will be a first step in enhancing library representation, it needs to be accompanied by important administrative changes to accommodate the broader needs of the library community in relation to professional and institutional interests. For example, a single peak library organisation will need to address the outcomes expected by members as advised by representatives of the sector at the Sydney

workshop and as outlined in section 4.3 of this report.

The detail of internal changes required to be made by ALIA to take on the role of a single peak body are largely beyond the terms of reference of this review but should include the need for institutional members to have voting rights, and attention to policy issues such as copyright. Like all peak bodies they are established to represent the interests of members and for governance and accountability reasons there is also a need to evaluate the performance of such a body.

However, we view with some concern the proposal that a single peak library body establish a separate council to represent institutional interests. We caution against such a move on the basis that it runs the serious risk of maintaining the somewhat artificial distinction between

professional and institutional interests presently applying between ACLIS and ALIA. Experience with peak industry bodies in their attempts to establish separate councils in circumstances where there are similar agendas have not been successful.

The establishment of a single peak body representing the industry and the profession will not only address the shortcomings of existing representation, but will well equip such a body to represent the interests of the library industry and profession into the next century. Further, the establishment of a coalition of library interests will provide an important new structure to better co-ordinate library representation in Australia.

Following implementation of changes arising out of this report, it is recommended that a review to assess their effectiveness be implemented three years after their commencement. ■

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