

Executive director resigns



John Shipp

ALIA past-president

With great regret, we have accepted the resignation of Virginia Walsh as executive director of the Australian Library and Information Association, effective from 21 January 1999.

Since she joined ALIA in 1993, Virginia has made a contribution to the Association which will have an enduring benefit and has set the benchmark for future achievement. Virginia's professional leadership has been manifested in many ways, including the range of our lobbying activities, the quality of ALIA publications, our sound financial position, and an enhancement of our public presence.

It has been an absolute pleasure to work with Virginia, and her dynamic approach to the affairs of the Association will be greatly missed. She has promoted libraries and librarianship at every opportunity and to great effect. Her championing of the best interests of ALIA was just one demonstration of Virginia's loyalty

and commitment to the Association and its members. Her good management and leadership has enabled ALIA not just to survive, but prosper.

ALIA has been fortunate to have had Virginia as its executive director and we wish her every success in the future.

The search for a new executive director will commence once ALIA General Council has had an opportunity to discuss the future needs of the Association. From 21 January, Jennefer Nicholson will be acting executive director. Jennefer has been deputy executive director since 1991, and is well-known to many members especially for her work with the ALIA Board of Education. We look forward to working with Jennefer and the ALIA National Office staff in the continuing development of a new peak body to represent the interests of the Australian library and information community. ■

Times of change, times of challenge

'To improve is to change; to be perfect is to change often'
(Winston Churchill, 1925)



Craig Anderson

ALIA president

ALIA has many opportunities for change in the approaching year. Change is not new to the Association, nor to the profession — what will happen in 1999 is simply an acceleration of the rate of change.

In the late 1980s we changed our name (from the LAA to ALIA) and our address (from Sydney to Canberra). In the early 1990s we had a new executive director, a renewed financial stability and a sound basis for operation. These recent changes are just part of a broader pattern of change and renewal: in our professional field, economically and in technology.

We will see as much change in the next twelve months as we have over the last ten years. Some of the changes will include a plebiscite over the name of a new organisation, transfer to an incorporated status, a renewed role in copyright, increased recognition of the role of institutional members in ALIA, new membership categories, and reviews of local branch support, national office roles, and the divisional and governance structure. In addition we will have a new executive director.

As all good management texts tell us, resistance to change is inevitable. A good manager works with that resistance to create a positive outcome. Somehow a good manager even works through the 'underground resistance' — those who say they are embracing change, and fully support the changes, so long as it is someone else who has to change.

So how do we move ahead? How do we include those who embrace change (so long as it is someone else who is changing), those who reject

change, and those who jump into change without looking?

To my mind, the guiding values of our profession have to act as our beacons, and our guides to the future. Those seldom articulated, but heart-felt beliefs which lead many into library and information work are now more important than ever. Our challenge will be to re-interpret these core values in a new context. Finding the common themes such as equity of access, a philosophy of service and a passion for information in the new era of technological imperatives and organisation turbulence is going to be exciting, and confronting.

We need our Association anticipate and respond to these challenges. We need our Association to support us all through the year ahead, and into the future. Having said that, 'we are the Association' — we need to provide a positive outlook for both non-members, and fellow members.

A vital part of this change process will be communication — both from officers and office bearers to members, and equally important, from members to office bearers, and officers. As part of this communications effort, the Executive, and national office intend to run a series of information sessions throughout the country. These sessions will include background information on national operations, the role of divisional office holders, and components on topics such as the image of the profession, and lobbying. These will be held in as many capital cities and regional areas as possible. I look forward to meeting you in 1999. The new year will be exciting, challenging — and ultimately, rewarding. ■