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Taking stock allows us to plan for the year ahead and to develop priorities...

The end of the year is traditionally a time for taking stock and reflecting on our achievements for the past year. Many of us do this in the course of our working lives particularly in organisations that feature performance review as a normal part of employment and follow this through with vigorous professional development programs. Sometimes we also reflect on our achievements in our social and personal lives. Taking stock allows us to plan for the year ahead and to develop priorities so that we can use the resources that we have available as wisely as possible.

It is appropriate that ALIA as your organisation also takes stock of its achievements. While these are reported formally in the ALIA *Annual Report* I thought it might be interesting to mention some of the highlights of the year. As an ALIA member you might also want to reflect on the achievements of the groups that you belong to as well as on your achievements as an ALIA member. It would be interesting to combine lists of highlights from our members and develop a map of ALIA's achievements for the year. For this reason I'm keen to have feedback from you and I invite you to send your lists of highlights and achievements to me.

Most of the achievements that are listed below have been described in different issues of *inCite* and you might like to follow them up in more detail. Among the highlights for ALIA that I would include in my list are:

- The Librarians Test case in NSW that firmly endorsed the value of the work of librarians and information professionals and recognised the critical role of ALIA in determining appropriate qualifications standards. Phil Teece and his ALIA member colleagues have worked tirelessly on this case and deserve to celebrate this outcome with great gusto and style.
- The educational framework developed by the LISEKA group, initially under the leadership of Mairéad Browne and now under Christine Mackenzie, assumes increased significance in the light of the Test Case. ALIA now has a real opportunity and imperative to develop a viable CPD program for its members that aligns with people's career stages and goals.
- The ALIA2002 conference took a new direction and opened our profession to the scrutiny of key figures outside the profession. While many of the speakers at the conference acknowledged the importance of libraries to society and the economy they reminded us of the urgency of advocacy, especially of our values. These values are of course fundamental to informed decision making and there are worrying signs that remind us all that they should not be taken for granted.
- The National Policy Congress focussed on

some of the larger issues foreshadowed by ALIA2002 and provided a forum for a preliminary discussion of an information agenda. This remains a vague concept but it is clear that in working towards an information agenda ALIA needs to engage with organisations that share its concerns and interests, not only in the library and information sector but in other sectors as well. The Board of Directors has foreshadowed a long-term planning session in March next year and the discussion of a draft five year plan will inform the timing of the National Policy Congress in 2003 and the representation of delegates from regional meetings and partner organisations to the congress.

- Collaboration with partner organisations has been a feature of this year. It takes considerable time to develop the relationships that underpin achievements and ALIA's partnerships are at different stages of development. The links with the Australian School Library Association are long standing and there are several shared projects underway or nearing completion. Links with the Australian Society of Archivists began to develop during the year and were formalised with the signing of a co-operation agreement between the two organisations. An emerging relationship is one with Regional Arts Australia, the Council of National Trusts, Museums Australia and the Federation of Australian Historical Societies for the purposes of exploring cultural development in regional areas and linking cultural development to other regionally-focussed programs.

Underlying these highlights of course is the energy and enthusiasm of ALIA's personal and institutional members who make these achievements possible. Your Association is very fortunate to include people who are prepared to commit to working for the benefit of others and pursuing the values which ALIA embodies.

Sadly two of our colleagues who demonstrated in large measure these characteristics in the contributions they made to the professional practice have passed away very recently. Ali Sharr, a former state librarian in Western Australia, will be remembered for the key role he played in the development of public libraries in that state. Margaret Trask, a former president of the Library Association of Australia, will be remembered for her advancement of school libraries and library education and training. The contributions of these two remarkable people are broader than this brief mention suggests and more complete statements are being prepared, but they serve as exemplars for us as we engage in the process of making choices about the professional commitments we each will make in preparing for the year ahead. ■