

# 2010 – Perfect vision?

Lee Welch ponders the latest ALIA glossy

Quiet, ladies and gentlemen, may I have your attention please? Good. Now, a show of hands of all those who carefully read the *ALIA Towards 2010* glossy brochure that arrived with your *inCite* in April. Anybody?

Go on, be honest. Did you read it? Or did you put it aside for that mythical quieter moment, wondering briefly about how much it cost to send you this latest item from the ALIA marketing stable and why you got one?

What is this 2010 thing, then? I am pleasantly surprised to find it one of the most comprehensible — and comprehensive — bits of blurb I have seen that explains who we are and why we are. Who is it for? I think, just now, it is not only for the wider community or potential members, it is also very definitely timely for long-time members too.

Reading through it, I recalled hearing one of ALIA's (multiple) past-presidents, Alan Bundy, talking to students about the Association and why having one, and being part of it, is important. Alan initially bypassed the stuff about jobs and networking to make the point that our Association is the only one charged with protecting the free flow of information in our community. I, as a member for eighteen years at that point — thought to myself, 'wow, that really matters. Cool!' Somewhere in my neurons, I once knew that. I had just forgotten in the madness of daily life.

I can also clearly remember many occasions in conversation with another past-president, the late Warren Horton, statesman for librarianship on the world stage, sparkling

with passion for libraries and librarians, and what we can achieve. He knew the history of our Association, its reasons for being and the challenges it faces. He knew and conveyed the sheer power that we have to change lives. I do not think that he could have stopped himself doing that if he had wanted to — it was in his very bones.

I know I do not have that breadth of knowledge, even if I do share that passion. Too much has changed in my more than twenty years of membership.

Our association is not a union (to the regret of some). The structural change at every level has been enormous in recent years, as has the effort to effectively implement that change. The ALIA 2010 process is about trying to create an Association that is relevant to the ever-evolving world inhabited by its members. So this document really focuses on plain spoken answers to our frequently asked questions — why bother joining, what are they doing over there in Canberra, what is in it for me?

I did sit down to read the brochure through carefully, and I found it quite informative. The goals are specific. State and special interest groups could note this approach and use it to their advantage. There is no better barrier to action and progress than vague, amorphous objectives that busy working folks have not the time to interpret, much less act upon, at the local level.

And what do we, as members, get out of this initiative ALIA national office has been sweating over (and paying for from our

fees)? Here is the rub, folks. The answer is not a whole lot, unless we also commit to putting in. If you want to see ALIA doing what it promises in 2010, then you are going to need to give ALIA National Office a helping hand.

Some members have certainly raised concerns about how things are happening and various policies at the national level. I have a few concerns myself. The recent survey of members' involvement in ALIA had one particular reverberating message for members in its conclusion that the members who benefit most are those who get involved, and the same goes for having a say in what the future holds for us. This Association, like many others, is utterly dependent on us, its members. No us: no Association. Not exactly rocket science, is it?

I fear sometimes that more of us would fail a pop quiz about the objectives and activities of our professional association than would pass. And I think that matters. Unless we constantly focus on the central tenets of our profession as a part of our daily lives, we are likely to lose the plot, the communities we serve will end up the poorer, and we will end up unemployed.

No association means no voice for those who work in, and use, library and information services. It would mean a free hand for censorship, a radical decline in the standard of community life.

I am not advocating that every member suddenly joins a committee. Life ebbs and flows: sometimes you have time, sometimes you don't. Sometimes there is something you are interested in, other things leave you cold. It is a matter of working out what fits best for you, and that is just as important as working out where your skills fit to do the best by our profession and the communities we serve.

We tend to make a lot of decisions with an air of finality, regardless of the lessons of life that teach us nothing much these days is so secure that we will not have to review them. So involvement might mean that you read *inCite* this year, and maybe join a committee, host an event or go to a meeting next year.

It might just mean, as you rush from task to task, clearing those viruses from your e-mail, writing that report, finding that blue book with the gold writing on the cover, or pacifying the boss, remembering what you — and ALIA — both stand for. It might just mean making time to read through that glossy you have still got sitting somewhere on your desk.

Our Association has just attempted to tell us what sort of organisation it thinks will work best for us in 2010. How well they have done it, and how successful it is, is really up to us.

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### Remember your ALIA post-nominals!

As a financial Associate or Library Technician member of the ALIA CPD scheme, you are eligible to use the additional Certified Practitioner post-nominal (CP) when you accumulate a minimum of thirty points in the first year that you participate in the scheme and while you continue to meet CPD compliance requirements.

When you accumulate 120 points over a CPD triennium (three years), you may apply for a Certified Practitioner certificate. To apply, complete the application form at <http://alia.org.au/education/cpd/cp.application.pdf>. A certificate fee of \$33 (including GST) is payable at the time of application.

As a Certified Practitioner, you display to colleagues, employers and the sector your commitment to career-long learning that will, in time, entitle you to apply for the distinction of Associate Fellow. Members in this new, self-nominating category must demonstrate current professional or technical and personal knowledge and skills, and have a significant degree of autonomy in their decision-making in practice. The full eligibility criteria and application form are available at <http://alia.org.au/education/cpd/associate.fellow.pdf>.

Associate members of ALIA, and Associate members with qualifications in an allied field admitted to associate fellow membership of the Australian Library and Information Association, may use the post-nominals AFALIA. Library technician members admitted to associate fellow membership may use the post-nominals AFALIATec.

For further information about the ALIA CPD scheme, post-nominals or the distinction of Associate Fellow, contact Jill Yvanovich by e-mail [cpd@alia.org.au](mailto:cpd@alia.org.au) or ph 02 6215 8216. ■