

2004 ALIA National Policy Congress

At the July Board of Directors meeting, the Board endorsed a revised model for the ALIA National Policy Congress (NPC) to take effect immediately. In this revised model, as in the past, ALIA groups are invited to nominate a delegate to attend their nearest regional NPC meeting. In the revised model, personal members and institutional representatives are also welcome to attend the regional meetings as delegates to the NPC. In the past, these members have only attended as observers. Another modification sees the opportunity for personal and institutional representatives, in addition to group delegates, to stand for election as the regional delegate to the national NPC meeting to be held in Canberra. In the past, only group delegates could be elected.

The model has been expanded to enable regional meetings to be held outside of the capital cities. This year, meetings were held in Alice Springs, Cairns, Perth, Darwin, Brisbane, Sydney, Canberra, Melbourne, Hobart, and Adelaide. Wherever possible, a member of the Board attended each meeting.

Full reports from each of the regional meetings are available on the ALIA website at <http://alia.org.au/members-only/governance/npc/2004/>. The NPC is a members-only activity so you will need to have your ALIA membership number and website password to access 2004 NPC information.

The national NPC meeting is being held on 19–20 November at ALIA House in Canberra. Delegates from each of the above regional meetings will attend. The Board has also invited the follow-

ing groups, advisory groups and committees to send a delegate to the national NPC meeting in Canberra:

- ALIA New Graduates Group
- ALIA Health Libraries Australia Group
- ALIA National Library Technicians Group
- ALIA Information Online Group
- ALIA Information Literacy Forum Group
- ALIA/ASLA Joint Policy Advisory Committee
- ALIA Public Libraries Reference Group
- ALIA Research Committee
- ALIA Publishing and Editorial Reference Group
- ALIA Expert Group on Government Publications

The program for the national NPC meeting will include celebrating the successes of 2004, finalising the ALIA plan for 2005 and 2006, group communications, issues of professional practice, and enhancing the engagement of members. Information relating to the national NPC meeting, including the program, background papers and list of delegates can be found on the ALIA website at <http://alia.org.au/members-only/governance/npc/2004/>.

Interested members are also welcome to join the aliaNPC e-list via <http://lists.alia.org.au/mailman/listinfo/aliaNPC/>.

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E-futures @ your library

Libraries throughout the world are seeking new ways of doing business in response to changing social and economic environments, improved technology and the huge volume of information being produced. It may be a cliché, but it is difficult to deny that the one constant about today's world of information is change. Today's changes offer libraries exciting opportunities as well as significant challenges. The State Library of New South Wales recently hosted a full-day seminar for decision-makers in the information industry, designed to explore how we might best deliver our services in this context of change. Eighty participants came together on 17 August to listen, reflect and discuss — assisted by eight speakers drawn from the banking, education and local government sectors as well as libraries.

State librarian and chief executive Dagmar Schmidmaier hosted the seminar, which was facilitated by Ian McCallum and Sherrey Quinn, directors of Libraries Alive!. Speaking were Paul Jennings, head of Electronic Channels Westpac Bank; Rick Molony, director of Online Services, Australian Local Government Association; David Feighan, ISP sales and marketing manager, VICNET; Louise Turnbull, acting assistant director, Teaching and Learning Innovation, NSW Department of Education and Training; Margot McNeill, project officer, NSW Department of Education and

Training; Dr John Bennett, general manager of the Office of the Board of Studies NSW; Janine Schmidt, university librarian at the University of Queensland, and Bronwyn Coop, manager, policy and research, State Library of New South Wales.

Key considerations emerging from speakers' presentations included business models, staff training, performance measures, competitive pressures, the digital divide, crucial relationships, technology opportunities and changes in the customer base. Seminar participants, drawn from state and public libraries, university and special libraries, other cultural institutions and government departments, spent the last part of the day exploring each issue.

Their task was to identify the important things that libraries need to be aware of, or do, in relation to each issue. Here are some highlights of these lively discussions, taken from the report compiled by the facilitators:

- In discussing the 'Digital Divide', information literacy was seen as a key factor partly because of a changing customer base. If 'old people know what do with information, but don't know how to get it' and 'young people know how to get it, but not what to do with it' then 'mixing collaboration, cash and compulsion' might be a successful solution.

- Technology presents opportunities to integrate new services with the traditional, combining online and real-life experiences to cater for the expectations of all clients.
- From the business models presented, participants identified the need to offer clients a range of options in service delivery. This demonstrated an awareness of expectations for rapid delivery of information.
- Most importantly, the need to work cooperatively was identified in relation to performance measures, competitive pressures and the crucial relationships that library professionals need to develop. These were discussed in terms of the ever-changing environment driven by client experiences.
- It is interesting to note that while staff training was noted as an important topic, no group took on this issue.

All present agreed that grappling successfully with these issues is critical if libraries are to fulfil their charters with vitality and relevance in the 21st century. For more information about the *E-futures @ your library* seminar see the report summarising these discussions on the State Library's website at http://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/profession/pdf/efutures_17aug04.pdf.

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