

Making the difference: achievements and highlights



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Making the difference is the title of the ALIA 2003–2004 plan which sets out the strategic program for ALIA for the two-year period from January 2003 to December 2004. The initiatives undertaken during the two years contribute to the *ALIA: towards 2010* vision document. As the two-year period draws to a close it is timely to reflect on what has been achieved.

The plan was developed by the ALIA Board of Directors and the National Policy Congress in 2002. The strategic direction centred on five key areas: members first; excellence; expertise and credibility; adding value; and investment in the future. Eighteen initiatives were identified within these five key areas, with five being selected as high priorities. These five high-priority initiatives focussed on the following:

- to develop a membership growth program;
- to develop a framework for career-long education for information workers;
- to develop and promote lobbying and advocacy resources for members;
- to implement new services and a marketing campaign aimed at new professional members; and
- to review ALIA assets.

So what have been the achievements and highlights?

Membership growth is essential to remain a viable Association. We need to retain our current members and increase personal and institutional membership overall. Retaining current members is a challenging task and a target retention rate of ninety per cent by the end of 2004 was set. At the time that the plan was written, the retention rate was eighty-four per cent. Currently the retention rate is eighty-nine per cent, a five per cent increase and within close range of the target. However, membership growth is not just about retention rates. For ALIA to remain a vibrant, dynamic Association, a net growth in membership is needed. The target set in the plan is for a three per cent net growth in membership by December 2004. We will need to await the final 2004 membership figures in the new year, but National Office staff and local liaison officers are working towards this target. If achieved, it will be a very healthy sign for the future of our Association.

The framework for career-long education encompassed both continuing professional development and formal education. In September 2003 the Board endorsed the *ALIA education framework* and the *ALIA*

career development kit, designed to assist members develop, plan and undertake their career-long development. The Board also established an Education Reference Group to provide advice on education policies and the course recognition program in line with ALIA's role as a standards body for the profession.

A number of lobbying and advocacy resources have been developed and made available to members such as resources on *Dealing with the media: A guide to raising sponsorship*, and an up-to-date *Inquiry watch* webpage listing Australian Government and other inquiries of interest to our sector. This initiative is directly aimed at providing effective and useful resources for members and will not cease with the current plan. So if you have found these resources useful, or want other resources developed, please let us know.

The campaign aimed at targeting new professional members has seen the establishment of the New Graduates Group (NGG — which now has more than 200 members), the New Librarians' Symposiums, a regular column in *inCite*, and the New Generation Policy and Advisory Group. These activities can only be judged a success if ALIA attracts and retains new graduate members. A target of seventy-five per cent of student members retained after graduation was set in the plan and will be reviewed early in 2005.

Reviewing ALIA's assets focuses on ALIA as a company limited by guarantee under the Corporations Law. As a company, the assets of the Association must be carefully managed. The Board of Directors is responsible for ensuring that ALIA is financially accountable and that assets are managed effectively and efficiently. ALIA's assets include cash investments, ALIA House and the Voucher fund. ALIA is moving to implement the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) by 2005 and assets will be valued to meet the IFRS requirements. The Board has established a Finance Committee, chaired by the president-elect, to assist it with the strategic and ongoing management of the Association's financial resources. The mid-year report for 2004 noted that there do not appear to be any areas of high risk.

The Board of Directors, in partnership with the National Policy Congress, is now finalising the 2005–2006 plan, *Making it happen*, to provide the program for the next two years. This plan will continue to provide a framework for the strategic initiatives taken by the Association to ensure that ALIA continues to address its Objects and reach our vision for 2010. ■

Feedback to your Board of Directors

Do you have an idea, compliment or concern about *your* Association? Contact any director and ideas will be reviewed at each Board meeting.

E-mail to feedback@alia.org.au will be automatically forwarded to all Board members.

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