

# First steps towards partnership

Public Libraries Australia (PLA) and the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) announced in May that they are embarking on a process of exploring collaborative opportunities and the potential for a future partnership. "Forging a shared future" on page 4 of the August 2006 issue of *inCite* provides background and an overview of the consultative process currently underway. ALIA President Dagmar Schmidmaier AM, Executive Director Sue Hutley and I met with the PLA Board of Directors in Sydney on 30 August to further the partnership discussions. This meeting was a very useful opportunity to share feedback, identify priorities and establish a strategic framework for the next steps in the process.

In general, feedback from members of both organisations is very supportive of the proposed partnership and acknowledges that working together is likely to produce significant benefits for both organisations. There are, however, some areas of concern that must be addressed in the development of a successful partnership. Amongst these are finding an appropriate, cost-effective membership model, ensuring effective communication to all members and maintaining separate identities of both organisations but at the same time merging business.

The meeting agreed on a number of activities as the next steps in the partnership process, including:

- To exchange information about membership in order to develop and test new membership models.
- To jointly co-ordinate and promote nationwide public library marketing campaigns, specifically @Your Library throughout the year and Library Lovers Day on 14 February 2007.

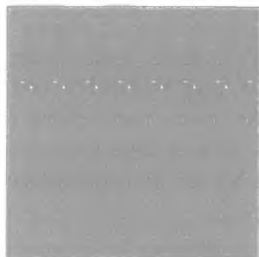


Niki Kallenberger, Geoff Stempel, Lynne Makin, Jan Richards and Robert Knight leaving the State Library of NSW after the PLA Board meeting

- To convene a meeting of key public library bodies in April 2007 to discuss matters of mutual concern.
- To work together to strengthen relationships with the state-based public library organisations in order to clarify roles and responsibilities and identify opportunities for tri-partite initiatives.
- To co-host a public libraries conference in August 2007 in South Australia.

The consultation and communication process continues. However, with a federal election due in 2007, there is no better time than the present to begin working together. Please contact me by e-mail ([niki.kallenberger@alia.org.au](mailto:niki.kallenberger@alia.org.au)) with your ideas, comments and questions.

*Niki Kallenberger, PLA/ALIA Project Officer*



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