Roxanne Missingham
ALIA President

**Feedback to *your*
Board of Directors**

Board members welcome your
comments and feedback. Please
feel free to contact a Board member
at any time.

E-mail feedback@alia.org.au
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A **national** information **agenda** for the **future**

National information needs an agenda for the future. When you read this Frontline, I anticipate that the date of the next federal election will be announced in the near future. A federal election needs to be held before mid January 2008.

ALIA has been discussing issues that need to be raised with all political parties to ensure that Australians are able to access high-quality information services, supported by their libraries, to improve education, health, communities and industry. Over the past year, Australian libraries have been working together to identify resources that Australians should be able to access wherever they are. Prices have been negotiated through the Electronic Resources Australia program, which selects the resources through a tender process. The resulting program is currently offered on an 'opt in' basis, which enables libraries to purchase access for their users if they have sufficient funds. For small regional libraries, these products are out of their reach. For all Australians to be able to access current health news journals, general interest and online full text reference resources, a relatively small national investment is required. Purchasing the nine products in the program online nationally would ensure that those in regional communities have the same quality information as those in the cities, and would be able to provide a content that would benefit all through the new broadband network which will become available across the nation.

Such national funding would enable Australians to have services which support literacy, education and communities with training and access through national, state and local public libraries. Our nation is fortunate to have established partnerships between these libraries which provide an important infrastructure to support Australians wishing to become better informed and skilled. A better informed and educated nation will be a major outcome of this development.

In addition, ALIA is proposing that there be funding for a national digitisation program. This initiative will enable our documentary heritage to become available online for those studying Australian history, seeking to understand their communities or to know about the development of Australian ideas. Industries will be able to use the resources digitised through this program. It will promote Australian culture, business and our values.

To advocate for support for such a national agenda, ALIA is working with National State Libraries Australasia (NSLA) and Public Libraries Australia (PLA).

So what can ALIA members do to be a part of this activity? You can contact me to discuss our approaches; you can see your local political candidates and mention the importance of funding, and you can talk to your colleagues and friends about the value of public libraries.

> I have a new blog: <**http:// roxannemissingham. blogspot.com/**>, and we now also have a blog for the Board. Its address is <**http://alia.org. au/blog/**>

Internet Filtering

The official launch of the Government's NetAlert–Protecting Australian Families Online initiative took place on 10 August. In her announcement, Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, the Hon Helen Coonan, said 'Due to the abject failure of the majority of state and territory governments to fund filtering programs within their library network, the Australian Government will step in and work closely with ALIA to install library filters and obtain associated on-going support'.

ALIA has issued a media release defending public libraries' initiatives. It is available at <**http://alia.org.au/ media.room/2007.08.10.html**>. Public Libraries Australia have also released a media statement on internet filtering in Australian public libraries, available at <**http://www.pla.org.au/**>.