

How can ALIA help you in tough economic times?

We're all facing tough economic times. The world economy is in decline and many of us are coping with the challenge of increased employment uncertainty. Some of our members are facing job losses now and few people know what their career holds in the next few years.

Pretty depressing, but even in these tough financial times, there are things you can do to boost your career and improve your job prospects. During a financial crisis it's more important than ever to demonstrate your professional value, and membership of ALIA gives you professional advantages including credentials recognised by prospective employers. We can also help by providing resources to keep you up-to-date, employment and industrial relations advice, resources for finding jobs, networking opportunities, and many other services.

Providing support for your career

ALIA has a commitment to professional education standards and lifelong learning. And this means you can benefit from discounted registrations on ALIA courses, seminars, workshops, and conferences along with discounted registrations to events held by our partner associations. Our Professional Development Scheme is open to all professional members of ALIA and the scheme will help you to strengthen your technical knowledge, skills, and competencies, keep you up-to-date, and create a formal record of your personal investment in your professional career. You can also analyse your career needs with ALIA's career-long learning user guide and career development kit. Use these resources to set objectives, gain input from managers, mentors, and training professionals, and build and maintain a comprehensive record of your knowledge, skills, and experience.

Keeping you up-to-date

ALIA can help you stay up-to-date with the latest developments and information in the profession. We provide free member access to over 130 online full-text professional journals with ProQuest's Library Science package. All members receive *inCite* magazine (11 issues a year) free which will keep you informed about industry news, trends, and all the latest developments in the library and information community. ALIA's e-newsletters ensure you are up-to-date with the latest news and trends through our monthly and quarterly news updates.

Providing support and advice

Our Employment and Industrial Relations advice service provides expert employment-related advice and can assist you with problems at work, coping with redundancy, negotiating pay, and general Industrial Relations advice.

Helping you find a job

ALIA's recruitLIS e-list and website is one of Australia's main sources of library and information jobs. Here you can search for the latest LIS jobs online at and sign up for an e-alert to have jobs sent directly to your desktop.

Developing your networks

Our profession is about sharing information and knowledge and ALIA provides you with opportunities to tap into the expertise of the ALIA community. You can increase your professional networks by volunteering for an ALIA group, or if you can't be at your local group's meetings and events, you can join an e-list and contribute to discussions there. Many of our members have found increased career opportunities and experience by volunteering their time for ALIA, including involvement on our Advisory Committees and the Board of Directors.

For over 70 years ALIA has helped thousands of library and information professionals through advocating for library and information professionals. To find out more about how ALIA can support you during these difficult times, visit <http://www.alia.org.au/membership.benefits/>.

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Professional development entitlements in the workplace

Firstly, what might be regarded as PD activities? ALIA defines PD as any activity which an employee undertakes to enhance personal and professional knowledge and development of work skills required to improve career prospects. PD can include conferences, workshops, in-house training, professional reading, networking, and further learning either through formal study or self-paced learning.

While the value of PD to employers and employees is obvious, employees sometimes have difficulty in obtaining financial support and leave from the workplace to participate in PD activities. The difficulty often arises where an employer might not see a less formal activity such as networking as constituting PD. Commonly this kind of networking occurs during lunch breaks with some overlap with work time. In the library sector, networking is of particular value to library workers in one-person libraries where isolation from other members of the profession can be a disadvantage.

Workplace legislation and awards generally have little to say about entitlements to leave for formal training or PD. Reference is sometimes made to such entitlements in collective agreements and individual contracts and are a matter for determination in each workplace. There is, however, an implied obligation on the part of employers to provide a level of PD, given that most employees are required to undergo periodic performance reviews which include the expectation that they will keep up-to-date with developments in the fields in which they are working.

Where an employee has queries about PD entitlements, the matter should first be raised with a supervisor. For further information, reference should be made to the individual employment contract and any applicable collective agreement. If a dispute arises a union should be able to assist. For any library employee, ALIA's active support for PD within the library sector should always be a reference point.

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