

## Developing a vision and national framework for Australian public libraries

ALIA is eagerly seeking your participation in a consultation process on a draft vision and national framework for Australian public libraries.

At the ALIA Public Libraries Summit on 16 July 2009, delegates gave ALIA a clear mandate to take the lead in developing a national framework for public libraries, working collaboratively with Public Libraries Australia (PLA), Friends of Libraries Australia (FOLA), National and State Libraries Australasia (NSLA), and the state and territory based public library associations.

ALIA has produced a project plan to guide the process, and has now developed a document which represents stage two – the draft vision and strategy.

The draft ideas are based on discussions and feedback from the ALIA Public Libraries Summit 2009, papers submitted by the key Australian public library organisations in advance of the Summit, and public library vision and strategy work carried out in other parts of the world.

The aim of a shared vision and national framework is to provide the Federal Government with proof that public libraries, although managed locally, are able to speak with one voice at a national level and can be invited to take a seat at the table.

We need to ensure that politicians and ministers at the highest level have a clear understanding of how public libraries currently contribute to government priorities, and provide a well-structured, considered and itemised proposal for investment in national programs, which will enable public libraries to increase their contribution to these government priority areas.

The consultation process will take place over the three months October to December 2009. We would appreciate receiving your response on or before **Friday 11 December 2009**.

The document and submission details are available via the Summit website <http://www.alia.org.au/summit09/>

## inCite themes and deadlines 2010: features

Jan/Feb

**New and emerging technologies**

feature deadline Jan 8

March

**The future of reading**

feature deadline Feb 1

April

**Customer service**

feature deadline March 1

May

**Building our Association**

feature deadline April 1

June

**Research and education**

feature deadline April 30

July

**Access and standards**

feature deadline June 1

August

**Special libraries**

feature deadline July 1

September

**Sustainability**

feature deadline July 30

October

**Building our profession**

feature deadline Sept 1

November

**Every member an advocate**

feature deadline Oct 1

December

**IFLA/Engagement**

feature deadline Nov 1



Australian  
Library and  
Information  
Association

## ALIA events snapshot 2010-2011

### Who are we?

As the national professional association for the library and information sector, the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) represents the interests of members, the profession, and Australia's 12 million library users.

### Summer Reading Club 2010

**READ on the WILD SIDE!**

**1 December 2009 – 12 February 2010**

Encourage young people of all ages in reading, writing, sharing books and other fun and engaging literature based activities.

### Library Lovers Day 2010

**Sunday, 14 February**

Make a date to love your library!

### Library and Information Week 2010

**24 May – 30 May**

This week promotes the contribution of libraries, information services and information professionals.

### National Simultaneous Storytime 2010

**Wednesday, 26 May**

Get involved in a special event – reading one book at one time all over the country!

### ALIA Access 2010 Conference

Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre

**2 – 3 September 2010**

### ALIA Information Online Conference

Sydney Convention & Exhibition Centre

**1 – 3 February 2011**

### ALIA National Library & Information Technicians Conference

Perth

**September 2011**

### ALIA New Librarians Symposium

Location TBC

**December 2011**

### Join us

Shape your professional future and become an ALIA member! And save on your conference registration.

### Need more information?

<http://www.alia.org.au>

Ph 02 6215 8222

Email [enquiry@alia.org.au](mailto:enquiry@alia.org.au)

# REGIONAL AND RURAL LIBRARIES

## Adventures with words

My journey with words has taken many twists and turns, starting with my mother teaching me to read when I was four years old. Now in her nineties and suffering from Alzheimer's Disease, she can no longer read and remembers only the distant past. Most of her waking time is spent mentally mustering cattle on long-ago family properties or riding her favourite horses. She lies immobile, barely able to speak – frail and helpless in a nursing home.

For an hour each day I read Banjo Paterson to her and Steele Rudd and Henry Lawson and make up stories about Australian life when she was growing up. How much she understands I do not know, but she becomes calm and smiles. Perhaps it is the rhythm of the reading or maybe she understands enough to make it enjoyable.

Reading has been my lifelong pleasure and words my stock-in-trade. I have written technical and educational material over many years and am now interested in creative writing. By nature a solitary person, I find reading the ultimate solitary pursuit. Sharing the thoughts and ideas of great writers and outstanding thinkers is a privilege. But I am getting ahead of myself – I want to tell you how I became a bookaholic.

I was born in 1940 in outback Australia where I spent the first 25 years of my life. My mother's family had settled there in 1870 on 100 000 acres (40 816 hectares) where they raised cattle, sheep, and thoroughbred horses. All our reading material was imported from England and, with the start of World War II in 1939, our supply was cut off. This meant that the many family members quickly took possession of what books they could and by the time I was born, there remained only one children's book of nursery rhymes.

It had obviously passed through many hands. The few remnants of its cover were defaced with crayons and every page was damaged almost beyond legibility. But I loved and treasured it.

I desperately wanted to learn to read. I could not wait until I was five years old, so after much pestering, my mother decided to teach me to read using this book and labels off tins from the pantry. She would hand-print other labels and put them throughout the house. We played alphabet and word games that she made up herself and I willingly learned to sound out and spell the words as well as read them. Three years later, I was able to read the children's stories in old copies of the English Woman's Weekly.

Books were slowly returning to shops in small country towns by 1949. They were quite expensive, so it was an exciting day when my small school was visited by a man who said he was a librarian and that he would soon be opening a library in a town 50 miles (75 kms) away.

The first time I visited the library, I was amazed. Never before had I seen shelves of books like this.

Over the years he introduced me to his favourite literature, taught me to type on his ancient typewriter, and enthralled me with stories of distant lands that he had visited. But these pleasures were soon to come to an end.

The 1950s were the days of McCarthyism and the communist paranoia. He was denounced as a communist, sacked from his job, and driven from the town. To this day, I do not believe that he was a communist, just a victim of small town mentality. My mother forbade me to contact him and I never saw him again. Just thinking of him now brings tears to my eyes.

Although I was an Anglican, I attended a Catholic School in that same town from when I was eleven years old. It was here that I met another mentor who was to have a big influence on my life. She was a brilliant young nun who regularly loaned me books and through her I learned about philosophy, religion, and botany.

Because words have always fascinated me, I loved reading dictionaries, but the library did not lend them. What I needed was a dictionary of my own.

School ended at Year 10 in my part of the world. I won a scholarship to study in the capital city. To celebrate this achievement, my wonderful mentor presented me with a copy of *The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*. "You'll need this when you go to university," she said.

I owe my education and successful working life to the great encouragement of my two mentors who shared my love of books and words and whose philosophy was "don't worry about distance and isolation – the path to education can be found in any library."

Diana Nolles  
via letter

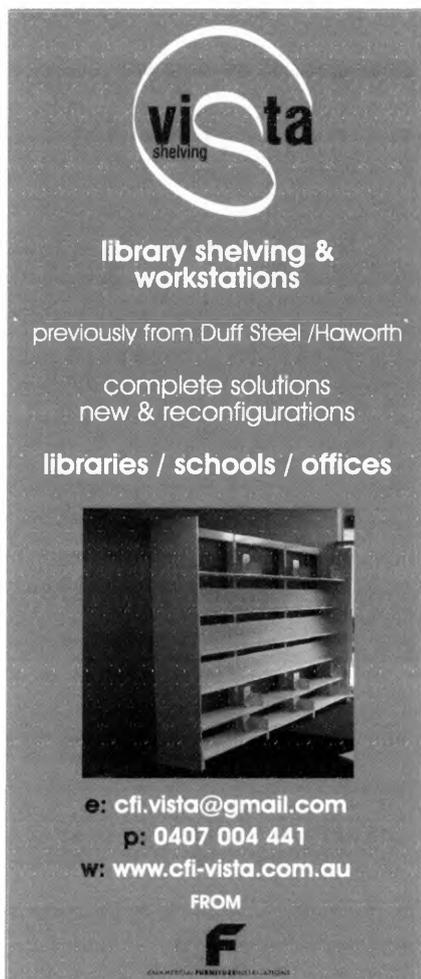
## Convergence: rural libraries lead the way

Convergence, in physical and virtual form, is deemed as one of the major issues facing libraries in the 21st century. But rural libraries have a long history of sharing sites, and only now are their city counterparts catching up! The difference is that metropolitan libraries are *choosing* to merge, whereas for rural libraries it has been necessary.

Partnerships occurred to prevent services being lost to the community when economic downturns and the vagaries of weather caused populations to dwindle. Frequently schools (particularly in South Australia), museums, galleries, and cafes joined the rural library's site; other co-tenants included government services such as Medicare (evident in Queensland), telecentres (many in Western Australia), indigenous heritage collections (see the Northern Territory's Library and Knowledge Centres), and tourist information outlets (common to all states).

Convergence reinforces the library's role as a social hub and demonstrates another 21st century phenomenon: That of the library becoming the 'third place', a destination essential to individual well-being, after home and work. In the country, as the ALIA submission to the 2020 forum (2008) noted, "Libraries are often the strongest and most sustainable source of support".

Various studies have proved site sharing benefits all those involved. For the library, new buildings or renovations are likely when convergence happens, and the pooling of resources means more finance, equipment, technology, and outreach programs are available. Winkworth (2005) stated models that link museums into cultural precincts with libraries, galleries, and visitor information centres give critical



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