

## So you want to be a Board Member?

Throughout our working life, no matter what position we hold, we are constantly accountable to somebody else. The Prime Minister reports to the people, a CEO reports to a Board, and those of us not fortunate enough to hold such lofty positions are accountable to other managers who may also report further up the management line.

This means that we are invariably bound by directions and desires of other people and, depending on the amount of influence we hold in the organisation, we may not always be able to have a say in the direction, strategy, and policies of the organisation in which we are employed.

So have you considered joining a Board of another organisation and, in particular, ALIA? The ALIA Board of Directors is the elected policy-making body of the Association. There are eight members of the Board, seven of whom are elected: the President, the Vice-President, and five elected Directors.

By becoming a member of the ALIA Board you have the opportunity to shape the future for the organisation; assert influence in topics that matter to you or to the consumers the organisation serves; and ensures the fiscal responsibility and sustainability of the organisation.

Boards can have a variety of models, however, in general, the Board's role is to oversee, evaluate, and review. The Board needs to demonstrate leadership (in partnership with the CEO) and guide the mission and direction of the organisation. The Board also has a statutory responsibility to ensure that standards and due process are followed and maintained.

The skills you may develop while on the ALIA Board could have great benefit in your own organisation and throughout your career:

- Strategic thinking
- Legal, financial, and other professional skills

- Marketing and communication
- Industry-specific skills and knowledge
- Stakeholder management
- Risk management and audit skills
- Reading and understanding financial statements

The Board is the primary link between the organisation and the broader community. As a Board member you must be familiar with the organisation's programming to clearly articulate the organisation's mission, accomplishments, and goals. Boards need to develop communication strategies that constantly build public awareness and reach new and broader audiences. This may involve Board members speaking at industry and other conferences and seminars.


Board members are often required to be the media spokesperson for the organisation. This can mean agreeing to be interviewed on a particular issue in the print or electronic media or to compose letters to the editor.

Articulate and influential Board members can be used to lobby politicians and brief government officials about the key issues facing the organisation and its members.

There are many skills that can be developed and honed by being on the ALIA Board. Serving on the ALIA Board can help you build a strong network through connections with other Board members and earn respect from colleagues and further your skill and knowledge base.

ALIA is your association – consider bringing your skills and knowledge to the ALIA Board.

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