

ALIA Special Libraries Advisory Committee (SLAC)

The ALIA Special Libraries Advisory Committee was established by the ALIA Board of Directors in May 2009. The Committee's role is to advise the Board on the development of a strategic program for members working in special libraries or with interests in special librarianship. The Committee's terms of reference can be found on the Committee's website. <http://www.alia.org.au/governance/committees/special.libraries/>

Committee members include Deanne Barrett (Chair) (WA), Caryl Armstrong (SA), Cathy Brady (ACT), Emma Datson (ACT), Gaik Khong (ACT), Andrew Meier (Vic), Joanna Ruxton (Qld), Louise Segafredo (Vic), and Rosa Serratore (Vic).

Key projects that have been completed in the first 12 months of the Committee's operation include reviewing the Guidelines for Australian Special Libraries. The resulting document was designed to be used as a general guide, rather than providing detailed descriptive guidelines. <http://www.alia.org.au/policies/special.libraries.html>

In May the Committee launched its Special Libraries Wiki. Designed to act as a resource sharing tool for the special libraries community and managed by the Committee, the Wiki will hopefully become a useful area for special libraries to share resources, information tools, and case studies. We encourage you to provide feedback and contributions. <http://www.alia.org.au/governance/committees/special.libraries/wiki/pmwiki.php>

The Advocacy project focuses on the value that special librarians and special libraries bring to an organisation. The Committee has produced a series of documents focusing on special librarians to complement the Guidelines for Australian Special Libraries. The documents have been posted to the Special Libraries Wiki and the Committee is seeking feedback on the value, role, and competencies of special librarians.

Members of the Committee, in partnership with AGLIN and Special Libraries (Vic) created a special libraries stream

for the ALIA Access 2010 Conference. With the success of this initiative, the Committee will continue to look for conference and PD opportunities.

One of the Committee's terms of reference is to generate a profile of Australian special libraries. The study will be conducted in the second half of 2010 and the Committee will encourage all special librarians to complete the survey to help ensure the best data set possible.

Our elist has been renamed aliaSPECIALS - <http://lists.alia.org.au/mailman/listinfo/aliaSPECIALS/>. The discussion list is to promote the interests of special libraries.

The distinguishing feature of special libraries is the diverse range of libraries and information services which makes our sector fragmented but interesting. The challenge is to create a special libraries community for all. The Committee is working towards providing an online environment where special librarians can share tools, collect data, and develop resources to promote the role and value of special libraries.

After many of years of being a volunteer in various ALIA positions I feel I can add a personal comment to 'Building our Association'. Being actively involved with ALIA has given me a better understanding of ALIA and issues impacting on librarianship. It has provided me with opportunities to learn new skills, expand my contacts, develop friendships, and to make a contribution to my profession and ALIA.

The experience has always been interesting and challenging with many rewards both intangible and tangible. I find working with other passionate librarians and library technicians very rewarding, their enthusiasm and commitment for the profession and ALIA is exciting and enjoyable.

Deanne Barrett

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Passion, cooperation, and collaboration: PLAC

Passion, cooperation, collaboration, opportunities, sustainability, and delight were recurring themes used by members of the ALIA Public Libraries Advisory Committee (PLAC) when I asked why they chose to be involved.

And for most of these members, it's a double dip of commitment! Over the past 9 months PLAC has undergone a considerable transformation whereby our members comprise the heads of state-based public library associations, territory representatives, Public Libraries Australia, and ALIA. This team is supported by a number of expert members. PLAC is now truly representative of public libraries in all states and territories. This provides a forum for debate as well as the opportunity to present a strong, unified front. Partners, politicians, and other groups now have a clear route into the Australian public library network.

PLAC has a number of projects on the boil with more in the wings. Many of these are a direct result of the ALIA 2009 Public Libraries Summit.

- Working with Libraries Alive! to produce National Standards for public libraries, and with the Library Agency to develop a National Vision and Framework. These will all be completed in the second half of 2010.
- Funding the 2010-2011 Summer Reading Club, around the theme 'Scare up a good book'. The campaign will run from December 2010 to February 2011 around Australia.
- ALIA reported significant gains in lobbying and advocacy, especially around the Safer Internet Group/cyber-safety; school libraries (the House of Representatives Inquiry), and libraries on the Book Industry Strategy Group. PLAC members supported these initiatives. Public Libraries have also been well represented at the ALIA Every Member an Advocate Workshops offered around the country.
- Public Libraries; a surprise on every page was a well supported stream at the ALIA Access 2010 conference in

Brisbane. Winners of the 2010 ALIA Library Stars were named during the day celebrating the innovative initiatives of public libraries across the nation.

- The National Year of Reading 2012, an initiative backed by public and state libraries in every state and territory. Many of the groups represented on PLAC have become founder-partners and this initiative will show what can be achieved when public libraries around Australia join forces.
- The ALIA Early Literacy Working Group was formed, after an exploratory meeting in June at the State Library of NSW.
- The project to support bushfire affected communities and promote disaster preparedness for libraries was successfully concluded in May 2010. A lasting legacy is a suite of resources to be used in future situations.

The spirit of 'together we can' is a reality in PLAC. To quote our members "I want to be able to shape the future of my profession and libraries" or "It puts the WOW in my day when I get to contribute to the big picture!"

PLAC members: Jan Richards (Chair, ALIA); Sylvia Swalling (PLA); Cr Win Gaffney (PLNSW-Metropolitan); Cr Graham Smith (PLNSW-Country); Cheryl Houghton (QPLA); John Murrell (VPLN); Janice Nitschke (PLSA); Sheena Joyce (PLWA); Vanessa Little (ACT); Cathy Hilder (NT); Jenny Rayner (Tas); Kathryn Cass (Expert member); Karen Ward-Smith (Expert Member); Roxanne Missingham (Expert Member); George Cowcher (Expert Member). PLAC is supported by Sue McKerracher and Donna McDowell (Library Agency) and Sue Hutley (ALIA).

Jan Richards

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