

Directline

At the recent NLA Innovative Ideas Forum in Canberra (#iif2010), it was mentioned that 'Wikipedia has the knowledge of the world' so I naturally consulted it for a definition of 'What is a Profession?' (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Profession>)

The article lists 21 characteristics of a profession. I looked at it and asked, 'are we doing all of this?' With the theme of Building our Profession, how do we measure up and compare?

Number one and two on this list are:

1. Skills based on theoretical knowledge
2. Professional association

Of the rest of the list, ALIA's services, events, policies and guidelines, and in fact everything we do, contributes to the LIS profession being a profession in Australia. The other question this brought up is: what do we need to do to maintain and improve our profession in the future?

The answer, simply, is education. We need to continue to hold and build on our standards of LIS education, we need to continue to educate ourselves through professional development, and we need to continue to educate others of the importance of what we do and what we believe through our activities and advocacy.

This year, one of our most critical Australian projects is the Re-conceptualising and re-positioning Australian library and information science education for the twenty-first century research project, funded by the Australian Learning and Teaching Council (<http://www.liseducation.org.au>). The aim of this project is to establish a national framework that will ensure that library and information science education and training is being developed in a cohesive and sustainable manner. The project is being undertaken by eleven institutions representing the broad spectrum and diversity of university and vocational library and information science education in Australia. The project will be completed in December 2010.

So how can you, personally, contribute to your profession? The good news is, you are already doing so. By supporting ALIA with your membership and reading *inCite*, you not only help us fund our many services, but you also show that you are involved, and you make a valuable professional contribution.

National Volunteer Week

A textbook definition of volunteering is "a practice of people working on behalf of others without being motivated by financial or material gain; intended to promote good or improve human quality of life." At ALIA, we simply define our volunteers as **everything**. We would not function without the continued and untiring efforts of our many volunteers.

National Volunteer Week runs from May 10–16, and provides an opportunity to highlight the role of volunteers to our profession and communities.

Our deep thanks to our volunteers who contribute to our many successes.

Advocacy Overload

ALIA is doing fabulously in the advocacy space, thanks again to our expert and keen members, our supportive Board, and a professional and supportive National Office who pitch in whenever and wherever help is needed.

Our special project officers and advisory committee members have been working hard on the following campaigns:

House of Representatives Inquiry into School Libraries and Teacher Librarians

With the House of Reps only calling this Inquiry on the 19th of March with submissions due 16th of April (while school holidays are on!), ALIA and ASLA have worked together to produce significant submissions addressing the terms of reference. ALIA has also put together a letter of support accompanied by 789 signatures of interested Australians supporting the value of school libraries and the importance of having a teacher-librarian in every school. The Inquiry Secretariat has been overwhelmed by the number of submissions for this inquiry. An About the House report and video is also being produced (http://www.aph.gov.au/house/house_news/Index.asp.) Many ALIA and ASLA representatives and selected experts have presented at initial public hearings at the end of April in Sydney, Melbourne, and Hobart. All the details are linked from www.alia.org.au/schoollibraries.

Western Australian Public Library Funding

Also in April, the Western Australian government announced budget cuts for WA libraries and collections. ALIA has worked with Public Libraries Western Australia to encourage WA members and the community to lobby their government to return funding to an appropriate level. We look forward to hearing the results as the WA budget is brought down in May.

Federal Budget

Speaking of budgets, ALIA will again provide a brief summary of the 2010 Federal Budget to members during May at <http://www.alia.org.au/advocacy>

Safer Internet Group

You will have heard news from Sydney of the launch of the Safer Internet Group and the website: <http://www.saferinternetgroup.org.au> and ALIA's contribution to the group's 5 Point Plan.

A comment at #iif2010 was 'are librarians good lobbyists?'. I replied by reminding the tweeters that you all are – and can be. We are running Every Member an Advocate workshops – free for ALIA members – in venues across the country. You can find out more about your local workshop here <http://www.alia.org.au/education/pd/pd.services/every.member.advocate.html>

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Your local ALIA contact

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