

the last word

TO RENEW OR NOT TO RENEW, THAT IS THE QUESTION

Member Tania Barry, who reflects on life as the Connected Librarian on her blog shewgirl.blogspot.com, gave this question some thought back in 2008. Back then, the answer was a definite yes – and she hasn't changed her mind. Here's why.

For me, ALIA gives me exposure to more than just the field I am working in (public libraries). I go to a lot of PD events that are organised by Viclink and the State Library of Victoria and I enjoy them immensely. They give me the opportunity to network with those who are in the same sector and sometimes the same field. This is not enough for me though. I didn't become a librarian with thoughts of always staying in the same sector. ALIA gives me the opportunity to network extensively with people outside of public libraries - that is important to me. I like the fact that I am involved in an Association that is working for the entire library and information field, not just one particular sector. I see issues such as workforce planning as something that needs to be looked at holistically from a national perspective, not only a local, sectoral one, as it has implications for the profession and industry as a whole. What else have I gained through my involvement with ALIA?

- The Aurora scholarship - by my calculations, I am about 13 years ahead in my subscription fees, just by receiving that scholarship, even allowing for

inflation. One of the criteria for the scholarship, BTW, is to "provide evidence of personal commitment and contribution to ALIA", so my involvement also helped me get the scholarship.

- Confidence to present at conferences and events and share my knowledge with others.
- Project management skills.
- Budgetary skills - managing a budget with over a \$100k turnaround is not something that happens every day.

The ability to be involved, from the beginning, in a tender process that, again, would not have happened easily (and boy can I read fine print now!).

There will always be detractors, and they have a right to their opinions, just as members have a right to theirs. What they are not entitled to is to continually criticise those who do actively participate, as it belittles the hard work that is being put in.

For me, the benefit I get from ALIA is that I am not only getting my own professional development, but also giving back to the profession.

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