

DIRECTLINE: GENERAL ELECTION

Were you glued to the TV at midnight on Saturday 7 September or had you already had enough of the federal election discussion? By the day of the big vote, it was pretty conclusive that there would be a Coalition government, but there were a few surprises in the detail.

In terms of 'friends of libraries', we were pleased that Andrew Leigh remains as MP for Fraser, ACT; Adam Bandt, as MP for Melbourne, VIC; and Amanda Rishworth, as MP for Kingston, SA; but sorry to see David Bradbury lose the seat of Lindsay, NSW. Colleagues will have their own names to add in the states and territories.

As our President says in her column, we will need to adapt our language in the new political environment. We will need to talk about customers rather than patrons or users; about products as well as programs and services; about our role in the knowledge economy as well as our role in social inclusion. It's not that the library and information services themselves have to change, it's simply that the words we use to describe them need to be rethought.

The political landscape has changes, but we look forward to working with old and new friends in the federal government



to make sure that libraries remain on the radar and at the centre of discussions about information, culture, education, internet, copyright and all the other topics that are so close to our hearts.

FUTURE OF THE PROFESSION

On 14 October, the ALIA Future of the Profession Summit takes place at the State Library of New South Wales, bringing together up to 100 representatives from the library and information profession, together with a handful of observers, from government and other stakeholder groups.

We are looking forward to the outcomes of a lively debate and interactive workshop, with keynote speakers Mark Pesce (ABC's *The New Inventors*) and David Alexander, one of the nation's top political strategists.

The conversation will have been informed by our own Future of the Profession discussion paper, and by the IFLA Trend Report (see page 30). As can be seen from both these reports, and from the work that has gone into preparing them, the difficulty is not so much in identifying innovative technologies and new ways of working that will change the shape of our world, it's in picturing how these changes will impact on library and information professionals.

We are holding face-to-face Future of the Profession workshops in every state and territory, and have already received a number of submissions in response to our discussion paper. There are major themes emerging, for example the need for continuous professional development,

the importance of promoting the unique combination of library and information professional skills, and the need to take what we do outside the physical walls of the building.

We know that there will be a full report emerging from this work. In addition, we anticipate some practical projects emerging from the Future of the Profession project.

In her column this month, our President talks about the development of an ALIA Research Agenda, for example. And we are in the process of reviewing our course accreditation, taking advantage of new technologies to make it easier for educators to report their activities, while enabling employers to have significant input into what is being taught. We are already planning an Education and Skills Summit for 2014.

We have realised that our work on the Future of the Profession in 2013 is a good start, but there is still much more to come.



SUE MCKERRACHER
ALIA Executive Director