

# tribute

ALIA 80

YEARS STRONG  
1937 – 2017

As ALIA celebrates its 80th birthday this year, we thought it would be wonderful to ask our Members how they have been inspired throughout their careers. As HEATHER WELLARD reports, ALIA created a blog so that Members could pay tribute to the people, places and things that have motivated and encouraged them in their library and information science profession.

A heartfelt theme that came through the blog entries was how librarians, whether at school or in a local library, inspired and prompted the contributors to become librarians themselves. For Karen, it was Mrs Brown at the primary school library who inspired her: 'With her encouragement,' Karen wrote, 'I read every book in that small school library – even the encyclopaedias. I didn't realise it at the time, but her gentle hand put me on the road to becoming a librarian.' Margaret Roberts wrote she fell in love at 13 with the school library: 'The teacher librarian at the time was Mr Michael Hill, and he instilled into his students a love for reading, learning and sharing.' Maggie McCaffrey said she spent inordinate amounts of time at the Moorabbin Public Library in Melbourne: 'Margaret Dunkle, as the children's librarian, kept aside new books for me, found little jobs in the library to keep me occupied (or perhaps out of her hair?), guided my reading, involved me in summer holiday activities, and paved the way for starting paid work in the library when I turned 15.'

Two bloggers reflected on their careers and their long-term ALIA Memberships. Margaret Whittaker was thrilled to have her 50-year ALIA Membership recognised at a recent event. She specialised in music resource provision and wrote: 'My career has definitely been enriched by my belonging to this Association and participating in its activities. An organisation is only as good as its members, and I can only urge others to become involved.' Fay Foster, who has been an ALIA Member for 60 years, wrote with a touch of irony that '... being a librarian never entered my head when I left school'. However, she fell into a job working in a library for the Iraq Petroleum Company in London and ended her career as a health librarian for the Mersey Hospital in Tasmania. She wrote: 'At this time, I belonged to the Medical Libraries section of the

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# MILESTONES IN THE 40 YEARS OF ALIA SCHOOLS

Sandra Ryan, an ALIA Schools Member, has prepared a timeline that covers the history of school libraries within ALIA. It shows the amazing amount of work that flows through this busy group and records its wonderful achievements. The timeline records significant events in the education and government sectors plus the responses and activities from ALIA.

CHECK  
OUT THE  
TIMELINE AT  
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MY CAREER HAS DEFINITELY BEEN ENRICHED BY MY BELONGING TO THIS ASSOCIATION AND PARTICIPATING IN ITS ACTIVITIES.

- Margaret Whittaker

Association. I still belong to this branch of ALIA!’

Places have inspired many librarians. Shelley Stephens wrote: ‘I didn’t know when I embarked on my library journey in the mid-90s that I would end up falling in love with an iconic building.’ Shelley worked in the Dennis Wolanski Library of Performing Arts, which was located below sea level in the Sydney Opera House. ‘Back then, it was a space known mostly to staff, actors, performing arts students and the general public who stumbled upon its existence at the bottom of a steep, dimly lit staircase.’ Karys McEwan wrote: ‘I grew up in the Western Australian town of Harvey, known for its citrus fruit, cows and Italian culture. I was, as the cliché goes, a small-town girl with big dreams. And those dreams were fuelled by the things I found in books borrowed from the Harvey Library.’ When Karys returns home she stops into the local library and says hello to Ruth ‘... the librarian who ultimately inspired me to become a librarian myself’.

These blog posts, together with our gallery of assets, will be published as Tributes and treasures, in a special edition for our 80th anniversary. The publication will be available to download from the ALIA website. 

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in our new library contract.



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