



LIFELONG LEARNING

Once upon a time I knew a pastor who started each calendar year with the same sermon. Called 'The Church I Want to Lead', it was an opportunity to remind his congregation about grace, learning, faith and actions, and starting the year with a positive sense of purpose.

I do the same each January. I aim, not always successfully, to clear some thinking space and ask the question: 'What world do I want to live in or lead?' This is a helpful question, not too tricky to answer, but it's tempting to give facile answers. It's also easy to set up challenges for myself that create a different story. The world I want to live in and lead needs new experiences in work, partnerships, leadership or mentoring. Most importantly, the question allows me to focus on what I, as a unique individual, can do to change the world in which I lead and live.

As a professional Australian living in 2017, I am so well off it's frightening. And to lessen the fear, I plan a balanced and productive life. I plan for joy, with family time, friends and travel. I plan for learning, through online courses, conferences and seminars. I plan for practical grounding, cooking new things, growing my own vegetables, learning to raise lettuce from seed, reading out of my comfort zone (currently the entire Stella Prize shortlist) and reaching out to people who are braver, stronger, more committed and more verbal than me and watching, hearing and following them (with Twitter, podcasts, coffee and cake).

Our theme this month is Learning Forward, and when I reflect on a lifetime of learning, the context is occasionally muddy but the ethos is strong. Rolf Hapel, as director of the wonderful Aarhus Libraries in Denmark, reminded us at the ALIA Information Online 2017 Conference that we live in an age when we all have an information desk in our pockets, but we can't let it stop there. Learn, share, live, reflect – and repeat until death.


This is my last *INCITE* article as ALIA President. It has been a privilege and a delight – and a learning

experience! Thank you to Rowena and her team at *INCITE*, to Heather at ALIA House and to all of you who have read and sometimes responded to my words. It's truly been a team effort and I'm proud to have played a brief part. The next issue will welcome incoming President Vicki McDonald and the theme is Library Design, but don't let that stop you if you have a half-written article about some other topic to share.

Write on. ✍️

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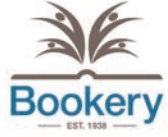
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