

ALIA ADVOCATES ON MANY FRONTS

ALIA is constantly agitating for a better deal for libraries. Here's an overview of the recent campaigns and successes on the advocacy frontline.

ALIA's advocacy comes in many shapes and sizes, all designed to support libraries and information services as well as library and information professionals.

We run annual campaigns to provide our Members with the opportunity to promote their library and information services. Library Lovers' Day, Library and Information Week and National Simultaneous Storytime take place every year. Through these calendar events we engage with government, the media and thousands of Australians to tell positive stories about libraries and the contribution they make to society.



We work with strategic partners to reach wider audiences. For example, publishers, led by Hachette, turned the Australian Reading Hour 2017 into a much bigger event than in previous years, with participation from politicians such as Simon Birmingham, Bill Shorten, Tony Abbott, Tony Burke, Mark Dreyfus, Kim Carr, Anthony Albanese, Tanya Plibersek and Sam Dastyari; high-profile authors Mem Fox and Thomas Keneally, and corporate partners Vicinity shopping centres and Google.

We are currently working with national early language and literacy, the health information workforce, GLAM, digital inclusion and book industry peak bodies.



We also create special campaigns to tackle specific issues. Two recent examples are Cooking for Copyright (2015) and Great School Libraries (2016). The first effected a change in the law, bringing in the same terms of copyright for published and unpublished works from 1 January 2019. The second promoted the value of school libraries to federal, state and territory government education ministers, to parents and principals, and to teaching colleagues through extensive coverage in *Australian Teacher Magazine*.

We ran these campaigns through our FAIR website. FAIR (Freedom of Access to Information and Resources) has more relevance for people on the street than ALIA, and this allows us to connect with audiences who support our goals but don't necessarily work in libraries.



We take up local issues, providing support to individual Members and Member libraries. While these are often behind-the-scenes activities, they are always appreciated by the Members involved. Successful advocacy has included helping to prevent the closure of the Public Service Association of NSW special library and

Goonellabah’s public library, persuading Rockdale City Council to vote yes for its new library, and helping to prevent Sydney’s Ultimo TAFE library from losing valuable floor space to offices.



Left: Mark Dreyfus, Deputy Manager of Opposition Business. Right: Craig Laundy, Assistant Minister for Industry, Innovation and Science, speaking at the ALIA dinner at Parliament house, November 2016

We create support materials for our Members in the form of reports, handouts, infographics, banners, tiles and posters, such as the ‘10 ways’ series. We make sure the content is evidence based, using the latest research from the library and information sector, and generating our own data through surveys and the annual *ALIA LIS Education, Skills and Employment Trend Report*.

We raise the profile of libraries and improve the strength of our position by contributing to the broader government agenda. Over the last 12 months, this has focused on Smart Cities, Sustainable Development Goals, STEM, and the Digital Economy. We have made submissions to government reviews and we produce *The Library and Information Agenda* before each federal government election.

ALIA guidelines and policies are used as advocacy tools by libraries, educators and professionals. Recent updates



have resulted in comprehensive guidelines for VET, school and public libraries and, during 2018, ALIA will be reviewing all our policies, standards and guidelines.

As an advocate for the sector, ALIA is uniquely positioned as the independent national peak body for the library and information sector, it's located within 15 minutes’ drive of Parliament House and federal government offices. On 7 November 2016 ALIA held a dinner at Parliament House to celebrate public libraries (pictured below). Politicians from all sides and library leaders from across the nation attended and it highlighted the role of public libraries in communities today. We regularly meet with politicians, their advisers and government departments to advance our advocacy agenda around library funding, digital transformation, copyright reform, literacy, the recognition of library professionals, digital access to collections, and championing Australian writing.



At any one time we are actively involved with at least eight advocacy topics and campaigns. ALIA is working hard on your behalf. Let us know if there is an issue you would like to raise with us (advocacy@alia.org.au). 

