

A BUSY TIME FOR ALIA

May is always a busy month for ALIA. We partner with other information organisations for Information Awareness Month and with Blue Shield Australia colleagues for MayDay. We celebrate Library and Information Week in libraries and the contribution of our volunteers through National Volunteer Week. And we provide the opportunity for more than 1.1 million participants to engage with National Simultaneous Storytime (NSS) 2019 across Australia and New Zealand.

Alpacas with Maracas proved to be an inspired choice for NSS 2019. It's a fun story, with great illustrations and it lends itself to a party atmosphere. At ALIA House, we were delighted to host a local early years group and two real life alpacas, Co and Chai, who seemed to enjoy the picture book reading as much as the children. After visiting our office, Co and Chai headed off to Government House with our President Robert Knight OAM and Vice President Viv Barton to meet the Governor General Sir Peter Cosgrove and Lady Cosgrove, who gave another inspired reading to a local school group.

It may sound like fluff – and the alpacas were certainly fluffy – but there is a serious message behind NSS about the importance of reading with children. We were pleased with the take up by print and broadcast media, including *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Guardian*, and *ABC News*, which gave us the opportunity to talk about the role of libraries in supporting early literacy and helping parents to be a child's first teacher.

Picking up on this issue's theme of 'what binds us together', literacy is part of the offering of every library – whether it's information literacy, data literacy, digital literacy or reading and writing. While the latter is reassuringly familiar year after year, the challenge for our Members is to stay on top of the changes brought about by new formats, new platforms, new technologies, emerging issues around copyright, safety and privacy, and the ever present threat of fake 'facts' seeping into our information channels.

What is ALIA doing to assist? We were pleased to be invited to partner with the Council of Australian University Librarians to investigate people's 'digital dexterity' through a survey which ran in June. We will be examining the responses to find out where our Members feel confident and where there may be a potential skills gap, which we can help fill. At the same time, we are developing specialisations for ALIA PD Scheme Members, to support ongoing learning in these various literacies.

Of course, 'what binds us together' is also ALIA membership. Together we are stronger. Together we can achieve more than we could individually, and together we can find solutions to the challenges that face us all. This year, I am proud to celebrate my tenth anniversary as an ALIA Member, but this is insignificant when compared with some of our Members who are being presented with their 60-year pins in 2019.

Thank you to all our Members, of however long or short a duration. Without your support, we wouldn't be able to do the things we do. With your support, we are able to advocate for libraries and information services and everyone who works in them. 🌟

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ALIA would like to thank all of our Volunteers for helping to make our Association stronger.

Thank you for all that you do!



Australian Library and
Information Association

