

Newsletter article

ASLA National Council members meet in Sydney

Councillors from each Member Association converged on Sydney on the 6th to 8th August 2010 for the Australian School Library Association (ASLA) annual National Council meeting. The meeting commenced on Friday evening and proceeded throughout the weekend.

The Friday evening commenced with the annual general meeting at which the following individuals were elected – President, Ms Darlene Hill – Vice-President: Association Relations, Ms Isobel Williams – Vice-President: Association Operations, Ms June Wall – Treasurer, Ms Chris Kahl – Secretary, Ms Olivia Neilson. Outgoing office-bearers, Mr Rob Moore, Ms Marie Clarke and Ms Liz Jorgensen were warmly acknowledged for their contribution to the association during their terms of office.

It was a very busy and productive agenda as representatives attended to intense discussion on the governance of the association in the context of changes to the national education sector as reflected in the activities of governments and education agencies, and changes to state and territory school library associations. A full day on Saturday was dedicated to the ongoing discussions on the development of a new constitution for the national association.

The day was facilitated by the immediate past president, Mr Rob Moore, who opened the day by giving credit to all the work that had been transacted by national council members to bring the association to this point of discussion. The purpose of the day was to resolve issues collaboratively and work towards a consensus for the new constitution. Three groups of councillors, lead by the office-bearers of the association, worked through a number of sessions to identify common issues. These were presented to the whole group at the end of each group session for comment and prioritising. The last session of the day was focused on the meeting of each state / territory group to draw together the day's work and then to come to a consensus on the main items that needed to be agreed to.

The next task is to integrate the agreed-to positions into a constitution document whilst retaining the requirements for incorporation of the association in the ACT under the *Association Incorporation Act* and relevant legislation under the Act. A lawyer will be consulted on these matters. During this process the national councillors will be kept informed of the progress and will receive the document to review the content with the view to vote on the constitution at the November National Council meeting.

Another activity of the meeting was to focus on the progress of the House of Representatives Inquiry into School Libraries and Teacher Librarians in Australian Schools and to review the recommendations as presented in the submissions. (Submissions and transcripts can be viewed at <http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/edt/schoollibraries/subs.htm>) A promotional video prepared by the School Library Association of South Australia was viewed. ASLA is keen to re-open discussions with the incoming government following the outcome of the elections. National and international research has indicated that a strong school library program that is adequately staffed, resourced and funded can lead to higher student achievement regardless of the socioeconomic or educational levels of the adults in the community. This research finding was consistently supported by the “hard examples”

presented by witnesses at each public hearing. The Executive Officer, Karen Bonanno, has written a “reflection” on the Inquiry which will be published in issue 3 of *Access*. Future articles will continue the “story” as the future of the Inquiry is considered.

In addition, the association has committed human resources and funds to the ongoing professional learning of our profession to support the implementation of the national curriculum and the attainment of national teaching standards, in particular, the *Standards of professional excellence for teacher librarians*. Our involvement in the consultation process with ACARA and AITSL continues to inform our members of the development of these national initiatives.

Darlene Hill
President