



**A**s the theme of this issue of *INCITE* is advocacy, it is good to be able to announce that in 2018 we are planning to run a new online advocacy course exclusively for ALIA Members.

We are often asked for advice about how to counter a threat, address a particular issue, build a case for change or raise awareness of a library's contribution to the community. Our new course will provide guidance and techniques relevant to all these situations, together with practical advice about how to structure and implement a successful advocacy campaign.

We hope this will be useful professional development and that deploying this framework will enable more of our Members to become successful advocates for themselves and for their libraries within the larger organisation. We also hope it will help build people's confidence.

I've heard a number of ALIA Members say they don't have the outgoing personality needed to be an advocate. In my experience, it's less about being an extrovert and more about being a good listener. Effective advocacy isn't about telling people what you think they ought to hear; it's about understanding their concerns and positioning your service as the solution to the problems they face.

This has been ALIA's approach with government relations. We have identified government priorities and aligned these with library interests. Over the last 12 months we have produced reports on libraries' contribution to smart cities, the STEM agenda, and the digital economy – all high on the federal government agenda. As one of the

lead agencies for GLAM Peak (comprising peak bodies in galleries, libraries, archives, museums and historical societies), ALIA has helped secure Australian Government grants worth more than \$400,000 for digital access to cultural collections. We achieved this in part by aligning our request for funding with the National Research Infrastructure Roadmap consultation, which highlighted the lack of humanities research infrastructure.

There are more examples of ALIA's advocacy on pages 22 and 26 and, of course, campaigns, events, submissions, research and reports are all important. But there is something much more fundamental than the activities and materials. Time and again, we have found that the best advocate for the sector is the person who does their job really well and has satisfied customers.

Whether it is the principal of a school, the mayor of a town or the senior partner in a law firm, when the key decision maker has had a good experience with their library team, they are far more likely to listen to suggestions and support investment in service improvements.

So even if you don't enjoy standing up and addressing a roomful of people, you can still be a good advocate for your library and for the profession. Simply do what you do, and do it well. That's the best advocacy of all. 🙌

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