

Your voice

What is a State Librarian?

We note from the press release on the appointment of the new State Librarian and Chief Executive to the State Library of New South Wales that the person thus appointed does not appear to be a qualified librarian. Nor is it mentioned that the appointee has ever worked in a library or in a library context.

The ALIA Board of Directors has been asked to deliberate on this issue as a matter of professional significance. We hope that these deliberations will go beyond the frequently encountered platitudes of 'changing times' and 'professional mobility', and consider the issue as one which is crucial to the future well-being of the profession. In ALIA's Statement on Senior Library and Information Services Appointments, the

Association reinforces its 'vital interest in promoting the most effective leadership of the major library and information services in the nation' and that those who are 'best-fitted' for leadership roles are in 'possession of formal appropriate qualifications and career experience'. It is self-evident that this wording refers specifically to library-based qualifications and experience, and clearly this standard has not been met by this appointment.

We believe that the offence in this case is compounded by the decision to use the title of State Librarian. That an appointee lacking the required qualifications and experience can enjoy the title and rank associated with one of our most senior professional positions is an affront to all those who value their own professional status.

Are we being precious? We think not. A State Librarian is just that: a qualified librarian.

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The ALIA Board of Directors considered the issue raised in this letter at their meeting on 17 July, and a response will be printed in the September issue of inCite.



Your letters on any issue of relevance to the library and information sector are welcomed.

All letters should be addressed to the inCite editor and may be e-mailed to incite@alia.org.au, or faxed to 02 6282 2249, or posted to: Your voice, ALIA, PO Box 6335, Kingston 2604. Please include your name and postal address with your letter or e-mail.

Letters will be accepted for publication until the 18th of the month.

 **libraries** australia

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