

ALIA Schools Special Interest Group

Terms of Reference



Purpose

The ALIA Schools Special Interest Group (SIG) represents, advocates for, and promotes awareness of the vital role of school libraries and the value of school library staff in education across Australia.

ALIA Schools provides a national forum for networking, collaboration, and ongoing professional learning, while promoting access to resources and facilitating the exchange of ideas among school library staff and other interested professionals.

Background

School libraries have long been a focus of ALIA, with the first schools-focused group starting in 1967. This longstanding SIG has focused on advocating to improve equitable access to school library services for all Australian students and over the years has commissioned and championed many reports that have provided impetus for subsequent government action. A timeline for the first 50 years of the SIG can be accessed [here](#).

Focus

ALIA Schools will:

- inform advocacy through ALIA and ALIA's school library sector committee, the Australian Coalition for School Libraries (ACSL), by responding to initiatives and preparing submissions that benefit school libraries and successful student learning
- identify, highlight, and help navigate issues and challenges impacting school libraries and the broader library and information sector, ensuring members are informed, connected, and equipped to respond to emerging trends and developments
- offer high-quality professional learning for the school library sector, welcoming both ALIA members and non-members. Professional learning offerings are guided by participant feedback and responsive to current trends and issues affecting school libraries and the broader library and information sector
- Identify, share and make available information and research on effective practice and issues relating to the school library and information sector, with a focus on open access resources

- build partnerships and working relationships with other school library associations, government bodies, and education related organisations to advocate for the school library sector and its staff
- create and review relevant documentation and resources that support the delivery of effective practice in school libraries so that we respond to needs quickly
- initiate and participate in working parties that inform resources, and efficient and effective school library services and programs
- manage and maintain the Sandra E Ryan Award for services to professional learning in the school library sector.

Structure

ALIA Schools comprises an Executive Committee, supported by Committee Members. The Executive Committee includes the following positions:

- Convenor (also has a place as an ALIA representative on the ACSL Committee)
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Professional Development Coordinator
- Social Media Coordinator
- Website manager

If necessary, any of these roles may be shared as co-roles by agreement of the Executive Committee.

Determining office holders

Office holders are determined through EOIs or as positions become available. It is recommended that incoming executive roles are staggered for SIG stability and are supported by substantial handover periods.

Commitment to sustainability and leadership development

ALIA Schools is committed to leadership development and sustainability of the SIG. Small working parties/sub SIGs are formed as required for designated projects enabling leadership opportunities throughout the year, harnessing committee members' interests and professional strengths.

It is envisioned that key positions of leadership will be rotated to enable new visions, fresh approaches, and continuity of the SIG. We encourage transition of leadership every three years, or as positions become available, supported by a process of handover.

Responsibilities

The ALIA Schools Executive Committee is responsible for following the guidance in the [ALIA Groups Handbook](#) (November 2025).

Membership

Participation in ALIA Schools is open to anyone with an interest in school libraries. Active members can participate in the Executive Committee or General Committee. Those who are not interested in active engagement can sign up to receive updates about ALIA Schools via the ALIA Schools website.

To serve as an office holder on the Executive Committee, ALIA personal membership or the formal nominee of the appointed representative of an institutional or corporate member is required. The ALIA Schools General Committee welcomes LIS professionals, students studying LIS, ALIA institutional members, or anyone with a connection to school libraries.

Relationships

ALIA Schools will work towards building collaborative relationships with school library focused organisations, including but not limited to:

- Australian Coalition for School Libraries (ACSL)
- Students Need School Libraries campaign
- ALIA Schools Cataloguing Community of Practice
- Schools Cataloguing Information Service (SCIS)
- Australian School Library Association (ASLA)
- State based School Library Associations (QSLA, SLANSW, SLASA, SLAV, WASLA)
- JALIA
- LISWAC
- Other ALIA Regional and Special Interest Groups as relevant and appropriate

Meetings

The ALIA Schools SIG aims to meet a minimum of eight times throughout the school year, with two meetings scheduled per term. Meetings are held online to enable national participation, usually on an agreed weekday evening. Meetings alternate between whole group meetings and working party meetings.

Conflicts of Interest

Any conflict of interest including any pecuniary interest must be managed in accordance with [ALIA's Conflict of Interest Policy and Procedure \(2022\)](#).

Changes to the Terms of Reference

These Terms of Reference may be revised every three years, or as required by the Executive Committee in consultation with the General Committee and submitted to the ALIA CEO for approval.

Version history

November 2023

Updated September 2026

Approved by ALIA CEO September 2026