



FAQ Proposed Constitution Changes

ALIA Annual General Meeting 17 May 2017

Special Resolution

How can the ALIA constitution be changed?

The ALIA constitution can be changed by a majority vote of support by eligible Members at our annual general meeting.

I can't attend the meeting, but I would like to vote.

You can still vote. You will need to appoint a proxy. There is information and a link to the proxy form to download on the [ALIA Annual General \(AGM\) meeting webpage](#).

What are the proposed constitution changes?

The proposed changes are to the Objects defined in Section 3.2 of our Constitution.

What is an Object in a constitution?

Objects in constitutions are clauses that state and describe the purpose and range of activities for which an organisation exists.


What are the current ALIA objects?

The Objects of the Association as set out in Section 3.2 of the ALIA Constitution are:

- (a) To promote the free flow of information and ideas in the interest of all Australians and a thriving culture, economy, and democracy.
- (b) To promote and improve the services provided by all kinds of library and information agencies;
- (c) To ensure the high standard of personnel engaged in information provision and foster their professional interests and aspirations;
- (d) To represent the interests of Members to governments, other organisations and the community;
- (e) To encourage people to contribute to the improvement of library and information services through support and membership of the Association; and

What is the proposed change to Object (a)

The proposed amendment to Object (a) of the Constitution, Special Resolution 1, adds the word 'environment':



(a) To promote the free flow of information and ideas in the interest of all Australians and a thriving culture, economy, **environment** and democracy.

Why add "environment" to the first object of our constitution?

The current constitution was created in 1989 and was based on a long tradition of the Association supporting social good as well as pragmatic professional activities. In 1989 the environment was not on top of mind as it is now. Evidence based climate science confirms that climate change is real and our environment will increasingly affect decision-making in all areas of society. It is important that our Association is mindful of environmental issues.

How does this relate to ALIA activities?

ALIA has already in 2017 established the triennial ALIA Library Design Awards that emphasise the importance of environmental sustainability. The refurbishment of ALIA House is taking environmental sustainability into consideration.

We will increase the awareness of the importance of environmental sustainability when reviewing all ALIA policies, guidelines and standards and encourage our Members to undertake environmental audits.

We will also be adding to our ALIA PD Scheme audit checklists questions about the awareness of environmental sustainability.

What is the proposed clause to be added to the Objects?

The proposed new clause (f) of the Constitution, Special Resolution 2, is:

(f) To endorse the principles of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 19, and the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals in response to the many challenges faced by the world today and into the future.

What is Article 19 of the UN Declaration of Human Rights?

Article 19 – Universal Declaration of **Human Rights**. Everyone has the **right** to freedom of opinion and expression; this **right** includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Cited 07/02/2017 <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>

Why add Article 19?

We live in increasingly challenging times and increasingly libraries, information services and workers are involved in decisions that require a position on access to information. Inclusion of Article 19 confirms our position on the importance of freedom of access to information.

"Freedom of information is the oxygen of democracy, making it possible for people to make informed decisions about their own lives. ARTICLE 19 challenges governments who do not wish people to gain control over their lives and choose to withhold such information."

Cited 7/02/2017 <https://www.article19.org/pages/en/freedom-of-information.html>



Do other Library Associations include recognition of human rights?

Yes, The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) includes Article 19 in its statutes (the equivalent of our constitution). For example <https://fair.alia.org.au/australian-library-and-information-sector-responds-us-immigration-ban> .

What is the history behind the declaration?

Following on from the experience of the Second World War, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the United National General Assembly in 1948. It set out for the first time a set of fundamental human rights to be universally protected.

“Australia was a founding member of the UN and played a prominent role in the negotiation of the UN Charter in 1945. Australia was also one of eight nations involved in drafting the Universal Declaration. “

Cited 7.2.2017 <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/publications/australia-and-universal-declaration-human-rights> .

What are the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals?

A United Nations initiative, the Sustainable Development Goals are a set of 17 goals with 169 targets covering a broad range of sustainable development issues including ending poverty and hunger, improving health and education and addressing environmental concerns.

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals are:

- Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere
- Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
- Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
- Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
- Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
- Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
- Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
- Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
- Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries
- Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
- Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
- Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts*
- Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
- Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss



- Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
- Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

Cited 7/02/2017 <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld> .

How are the Sustainable Development Goals relevant to libraries and information services?

Libraries and access to information contribute to improved outcomes across the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by:

- Promoting universal literacy, including digital, media and information literacy and skills, with the support of dedicated staff;
- Closing gaps in access to information and helping government, civil society and business to understand local information needs better;
- Providing a network of delivery sites for government programmes and services;
- Advancing digital inclusion through access to ICT;
- Serving as the heart of the research and academic community; and
- Preserving and providing access to the world's culture and heritage.

Cited 07/02/2017 <http://www.ifla.org/node/11013>.

Does Australia support the UN 2030 SDG agenda?

From the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade website:

“The UN's 193 member states formally agreed to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (the 2030 Agenda) on 25 September 2015 in New York. The new agenda provides a roadmap for global development efforts to 2030 and beyond.

While non-binding, the 2030 Agenda will be highly influential, shaping development cooperation and finance flows from a range of sources, including nation states, multilateral organisations, the private sector and philanthropic entities. “

Cited 7.2.2017 <http://dfat.gov.au/aid/topics/development-issues/global-development-agenda/Pages/global-development-agenda.aspx> .

How does this relate to ALIA Activities?

ALIA has attended several meetings with its Federal Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). At the first meeting, in May 2015, ALIA explained the potential of libraries to assist in delivering the draft agenda. Since then, the discussions have broadened to three roles: libraries supporting the freedom of access to information outcomes, libraries providing examples of success, which can be used as part of Australia's reporting, and libraries helping to communicate the 2030 agenda to the general population.

- Towards the end of 2016, ALIA arranged for DFAT executives to attend a meeting of peak bodies representing galleries, libraries, archives, museums, historical societies, and other collecting



institutions, to explore the opportunity for a broader Galleries, Libraries, Archives, Museums (GLAM) approach to the Sustainable Development Goals.

- At the same time, the ALIA Board has reviewed its own Constitution and there will be an opportunity for Members to vote for a new Object of the Association related to the Sustainable Development Goals at its AGM in May 2017.
- Australia has signed an agreement to join the IFLA IAP Program in January 2017.

Cited 07/02/2017 <http://www.ifla.org/node/11195>.

7 March 2017

