

SUMMER
2009

VOL XVII, ISSUE 58
ISSN: 1323-0190

FOLA

NEWS UPDATE

life membership

Margaret Broeks



Margaret Broeks being presented with Life Membership by FOLA President, Dr Alan Bundy AM at the University of Melbourne, 9 December 2009.

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Daniel Ferguson
Executive Director FOLA



ALIA Partnership

On 24 November 2009 the Executive Directors of the Australian Library & Information Association and FOLA signed a Memorandum of Understanding on behalf of the two organisations. The agreement sets out the formal relationship where in the two bodies have agreed on a number of areas mutually beneficial to both. Each organisation will: collaborate on professional development opportunities, share knowledge and take joint action where appropriate on issues relating to advocacy, work jointly to consider international relations issues, work cooperatively in areas of mutual benefit and interest to each organisation, offer the other organisation's members the member rate for their events, and ALIA continue to host the FOLA website. This agreement continues the relationship which has been growing over recent years, culminating in the Public Libraries Summit held in Canberra last year. This agreement displays the commitment of both ALIA and FOLA to improve library services to our nation. A copy of the agreement can be viewed at <http://www.alia.org.au/governance/affiliation.html>

Supporting Friends in New Zealand

FOLA President, Dr Alan Bundy AM has written to the Editor of the *Bay of Plenty Times*, in New Zealand, in response to a proposal by the local Council to place a charge on book loans. His letter is included in this *NewsUpdate*. The issue of free public library services should be of concern to all Friends of Library groups worldwide. New Zealand has some outstanding library services, along with Friends groups, and the quality of these services must be supported and maintained.

Margaret Broeks - Life Membership

Since the establishment of FOLA in December 1994, Margaret Broeks has been our Treasurer. This has been an outstanding contribution of voluntary service and dedication to our organization. Attending virtually every committee meeting, during this period, travelling to other states at her own expense and providing every aspect of service with professionalism and enthusiasm. Apart from her work with FOLA, Margaret has been the President of the Friends of Altona Library in Victoria for a period of 20 years, giving a combined total of more than 45 years committee service to the work of Friends of Libraries in Australia.

It is the dedication of such people that gives so much to our libraries and our communities. FOLA was pleased to recognize this contribution with the presentation of Life Membership to Margaret by our President, Dr Alan Bundy AM in December 2009.

"Apart from her work with FOLA, Margaret has been the President of the Friends of Altona Library in Victoria for a period of 20 years, giving a combined total of more than 45 years committee service to the work of Friends of Libraries in Australia."



Daniel Ferguson (FOLA), Jan Richards and Sue Hutley of ALIA sign the Memorandum of Understanding

NO MEMBERSHIP FEES AT STIRLING

Friends of the Library, Stirling in South Australia have initiated a radical new way of attracting and maintaining members. They have abolished membership fees.

The Friends currently has about 290 people on the newsletter list of whom about 30 are councilors, journalists and the like, rather than members. More than half the membership proper is non-financial in any given year, however hard they try to follow up on unpaid membership dues. President, Dr Tony Stimson says they spend a great deal of unproductive time worrying about how best to hold the existing membership and chase non-financial members, generally unsuccessfully, all time which might be spend more productively on other activities for the betterment of the Library.

Over the last 18 months they have rethought the whole question of membership and membership fees, and in co-operation with Dee O'Loughlin, Library Manager, have developed a new approach based on the following logic:

1. The Coventry Library has about 19,000 members of whom say 14,000 might be adults.
2. Every three years all Library members are required to fill in a form to renew their library membership and be issued with a new card.
3. Henceforth the duty librarian will automatically give the renewing member a flyer outlining FOLS objectives, including and invitation to join FOLS and reasons why he or she might give FOLS membership consideration.
4. As FOLS membership now costs nothing, and members can cancel their membership at any time, a lot of will tick the FOLS box as they have nothing to lose and will not be bombarded with emails.
5. In so doing they make a conscious decision to authorize the Library to make their name,

address and email address available to FOLS for the sole purpose of communicating news about FOLS, its activities, talks, offers and fundraising activities such as offer with Mike Press Wines.

6. They will then be members of both FOLS and the Library.
7. All new members will have the option to join FOLS as existing members renewing their membership.
8. Theoretically every member, existing or new, will be given the opportunity to join FOLS over a three year period at the point of contact when they join the Library for the first time or renew their memberships.

With 15,000 adult members, the membership might increase from 290 Friends to over 5,000 over three years, assuming a pick up rate of one-third, or 1,500 with only a 10 per cent pick up. Regular updates electronically about library news and FOLS events will expand the membership, thereby raising the consciousness of the community about the library. With the expanded membership, Stirling anticipate raising more funds for the Library from, wine offers, admission fees to talks, the sale of raffle tickets and the publicizing of second hand book sales.

It was necessary to make changes to the Friends constitution, deleting any reference to membership fees. This update was adopted at the AGM in July 2009. The new arrangements were introduced in January 2010, with support from the Library's IT Manager and full co-operation of Library Manager Dee O'Loughlin. Friends President, Dr Tony Stimson states, we are heading into uncharted waters, but would be happy to hear from any other Library Friends groups who have undertaken such a process.

http://www.ahc.sa.gov.au/webdata/resources/files/FOLS_new_joining_website.pdf

"President, Dr Tony Stimson says they spend a great deal of unproductive time worrying about how best to hold the existing membership."

"Theoretically every member, existing or new, will be given the opportunity to join FOLS over a three year period."

THE KEYS TO SUCCESS — THE FRIENDS PERSPECTIVE:



Debbie Sommers, Friends of Port Macquarie Library

Some years ago I attended a FOLA conference in Adelaide, I recall in particular a speech by the President of the Friends of the South Australian State Library. He spoke about all the types of Friends one experiences in life — old friends, new friends, good friends, occasional friends, casual friends, sometimes friends, friends of friends, best friends...the list went on. What he said to remember is that no matter what type of friends they are, they are still friends. I think this is very true and something to keep in mind when looking at how we engage and generate new interest in the Friends.

Background

By way of background the Friends group was initiated to assist in raising awareness and lobbying for a new library by the then Library Manager in 1989. The group was initially formed from representatives of other community groups within the town and four of those members remain today.

Our membership list is usually around the 75 mark, and is culled regularly as our \$2 lifetime membership joining fee does attract many people. Culling is usually on the basis that we have not seen or heard of the person over a 2 year period. An annual membership fee has recently been considered and rejected on the basis of time and workload involved. Occasionally culling the membership list takes little effort.

Our friends come in all shapes and sizes, male and female with our youngest member aged 50, and our oldest member aged 90 (that we know of). We also have spouses, partners, siblings, sons and daughters who support the Friends from time to time.

In reality at any given time we have about 40 active members. By active I mean those who regularly attend meetings and/or some events across the year. The attendance at meetings ranges between 20-30 people. Meetings used

to have a guest speaker but the last few years we have gone more DIY entertainment and our President's never ending supply of quirky quizzes can amuse or frustrate equally.

Library volunteers are quite separate to the Friends. These are managed directly by library management. Some of the Friends are also library volunteers, most are not. Some of the library volunteers are Friends, most are not.

The Friends maintain their own membership records, do their own newsletters and communications generally. The library provides stationery and mail facilities. The Friends are not incorporated, choose not to have their own bank account and all monies are deposited in the library accounts. The Friends have an excellent working relationship with library management and staff.

Engaging new interest

Communication is probably the key here. When someone joins your group, what do you do? Hope they turn up at your next meeting, so you can meet them? Okay, fair enough, but have you told them when you meet and where, what's happening, perhaps there are events planned before your next meeting and where and how to find our more information.

The Friends of Port Macquarie Library do this by sending out a regular newsletter. Members joining between meetings and newsletters are sent the most up to date newsletter or update as soon as they join. They are also welcomed in writing in the next edition of the newsletter.

In addition, the Friends keep an up to date notice board at Port Macquarie Library thanks to the Library it is right near the door, you can't miss it! New members complete a joining form. It is attached to a brochure which is currently terribly out of date and due for a makeover. The Friends also have a web page on the Port Macquarie Library

"Communication is probably the key here. When someone joins your group, what do you do?"

ENGAGING AND GENERATING NEW INTEREST IN THE FRIENDS

"We have had lots of new members join and remembering that not all Friends are interested in everything you do or offer participation levels have been quite strong."

site which is sometimes out of date and use the FOLA web page to keep up to the minute information at hand for members and prospective members. Lately the Friends are also bloggers and have the opportunity to communicate with members on the Library blog. It's not as scary as Facebook!

The Port Macquarie Friends meet 5 times per year and issue about the same number of newsletters. They also issue flyers and updates in between newsletters and meetings if necessary. The web pages are updated as soon as there is something new to communicate.

Generating new interest

Looking back over the past few years, the Friends have generated a lot of new interest. We have had lots of new members join and remembering that not all Friends are interested in everything you do or offer participation levels have been quite strong.

"Feed them and they will come", certainly springs to mind. Many of our most successful events have involved food and entertainment in some form or another.

Looking back over the past few years:

"Souper" Stories, Travel Stories, Sonnets, Scenes and Sounds have generated new and ongoing interest and enthusiasm.

So too, have several one off functions such as the JC Williamson exhibition opening. All have been held in the library after hours and two literary lunches have been held off site.

Then of course, there's the biggest morning tea and our Mad Hatter's Tea Party. This theme was so successful we kept using it for several years. It was so successful that now everybody else's morning tea also uses it! Help – we are now looking for a new biggest morning tea theme.

We are big on themes for any event or occasion and our Christmas lunches are good examples of this – from an 'Over the Top' Christmas of red and green to last year's 'Quiet White Christmas'. We are fortunate that we do not have to fund raise for the library itself. Our fund raising efforts go towards supporting our two literacy programs.

Keeping to our mission and objectives we have engaged with the community through these programs. The first was Reading Literacy Awards to all 24 local primary schools and the second introduced in February 2006, is Bookstart. Bookstart provides a reading and literacy bag to all new mothers giving birth at Port Macquarie Base Hospital. A sample is on display here today.

The Friends also support a Book group which meets monthly at the library, and the Friends are promoting a new library initiative called Bookshare to assist all local book groups. The Friends also offer book sales both as a event or as regular sales through a trolley in the library. The literacy programs are funded from the monies raised through book sales. Last years sales were around \$11,000, a great effort by any measure.

Until recently, the Friends also provided quarterly book reading lists with reviews by members. A fall off in reviewers and advances with online catalogues, blogs and reviews resulted in us ceasing the printed book lists earlier this year.

I guess some of what I have been talking about sounds like work and it is, but we also have fun, that's a must. If it isn't going to be enjoyable then don't do it.

(continued overleaf)

ENGAGING AND GENERATING NEW INTEREST IN THE FRIENDS



Promotion, Promotion and Promotion

Engaging and generating new interest is aided by self promotion. Getting your group out there in the paper and sometimes on the radio and television helps enormously. Spruiking is not just for business and television shows, tell your community about what you are going to do and again when you do it. We do! The local newspaper is always looking for material and a good story, particularly about local events and organizations. Our relationship with the *Port Macquarie News* is a good one, we provide the stories and photographs and they print them. What more could we ask for!

We promote on notice boards and websites and send out media releases for any events that we want the public to know about and attend. After we hold events we often put the photographs from the event on our notice board, people love seeing themselves on the board. Speaking of photographs – take lots of them, you will need them in your promotion and also in your archives. It's handy to have a few images to put up when doing presentations like this one and also some on hand to send out with media releases. We even do our own photo shoots! Don't rely on your local press to take all the photographs they are busy and sometimes there is more important news going on elsewhere but they will usually publish what you send them.

The beauty of using the media and especially your local press is that it costs you nothing other than a little know how, time and effort. The 'know how' part can be easily learnt. The time and effort is of course another story.

The Future

The ageing profile of our membership like so many other community organizations is a concern. A priority should be attracting new and younger members. Continuing to have a fresh outlook requires ongoing input from your membership and also new ideas. Harness the energy and enthusiasm from new members when you are lucky to get them and support their ideas and initiatives.

Looking back, I think we have found some success. Making it on the front page of the FOLA update was special for us. (Even if Daniel did make our local member and then Mayor look like they were from Mars.)

Also, we have received three (so far) Best of Friends Awards in our category. It was a pleasure for both Judith and I to accept these personally a few years ago.

I suggest you don't deviate too far from your aims and objectives whatever they are. A focused group is in our experience a successful one.

Extract of a Seminar Paper presented by Debbie Sommers, former President of the Friends of Port Macquarie Library held at the Port Macquarie Library on 27 August 2009 prior to the FOLA Annual General Meeting.

"The beauty of using the media and especially your local press is that it costs you nothing other than a little know how, time and effort."

A charge on book loans

FOLA President, Dr Alan Bundy has written to the Editor of the *Bay of Plenty Times*, in response to the proposal by Tauranga City Council in New Zealand to place a charge on book loans.



"We have had lots of new members join and remembering that not all Friends are interested in everything you do or offer participation levels have been quite strong."

In a 1960 review of the development of free public libraries, a British book identified the four leading countries. These were the US, UK, Denmark, and New Zealand. Australia was very far behind New Zealand (as in many other things!) in recognising the value of investing in free public libraries. It has only really done so since the 1960s. New Zealand has done so since the 1890s.

At the beginning of the 21st century, encouraged by UNESCO, of which New Zealand is a respected member, more countries worldwide are now investing in their free public library systems in recognition of what is well-described in Public libraries in New Zealand: a strategic framework 2006 to 2016 as 'Public libraries engage, inspire and inform citizens and help build strong communities'. They provide an outstanding return on investment, which from recent US research is at least \$5 for every dollar invested in them.

It is unfortunate then, that the legacy of free public libraries available equally to all, in which New Zealand can take pride as a world-leader, is being undermined by proposals such as that by Tauranga City Council to impose charges for book loans, and reduce library collections. Such charges are inequitable in their outcomes, and do not even result in substantial revenues if the true practical and public relations costs of their collection are allowed for. They also result in less use of a public

library, when any council with a real concern for its community should be encouraging, not discouraging, library use. A public library is one of the very few things in civil society which can never be overused, but rationing techniques such as insidious charges inevitably restrict its use.

The cost to ratepayers of maintaining a free and quality public library service in Tauranga is a relatively small percentage of their rates, and the cost per capita is a matter of cents per day. Despite this small investment, its library service – as in local government elsewhere – will be by far Tauranga City Council's most accessible, used and valued community service. On that basis it should be a priority call on rates, not reduced to charging.

Local Government New Zealand signed off in 2006 to *Public libraries of New Zealand: a strategic framework 2006 to 2016*, with its President Basil Morrison observing that 'New Zealand councils have a long and proud history of investing in public libraries'. Indeed they have. In that historical context alone, the elected members of Tauranga City Council would be wise to very carefully and transparently evaluate the motivations behind, and the impacts of, the short-sighted proposals for its public library service.



Cut all librarians before any cop? Why Friends are important

Facing a \$242 million budget deficit, Phoenix (USA) are planning a series of cuts to all types of city services. Transportation, Senior Centres, Libraries. As well as police and firefighters.

Already the police are fighting back. The Phoenix Law Enforcement Association (PLEA) has sponsored a television spot showing a frightened woman in a darkened house calling 911. When PLEA President Mark Spencer was asked, "Should EVERY librarian be cut before ANY police officer?" his reply was "It might come down to that."

The response from the public has been mixed.

"We need libraries AND police, but the legislature thinks we just need more tax cuts for the rich and for corporations."

"Funding libraries is not an inherently government function. The private sector could fund a library just like they fund museums. Police, fire and safety functions ARE government functions. Fund these before any library, community centre, senior centre etc."

– Extract from article by E J Montini *The Arizona Republic* (USA)

Friends around Australia

News, Events & Ideas...

National Library (ACT)

The Friends were pleased to announce their 2,000th member, Bronwen Sissons from the Canberra suburb of Ainslie, who joined the Friends Committee for afternoon tea in September.

The November event celebrated the contribution to Australian publishing of Ita Buttrose. The celebration was attended by some 200 Friends.

The Friends have announced that the 2010 Spring Tour will visit Galong for an overnight stay at St Clement's Retreat. The tour will include talks on a range of literary, local, religious and Irish history topics.



Thuringowa (Qld)

The one week book sale during October/November proved successful and raised over \$800. The 'End of the Year' function was held when members and Library staff are thanked for their efforts over the past year, and this year a voucher from "Mary Who?" was made available.

National Gallery (Vic)

The December meeting had guest speaker Dr Sheridan Palmer, from the University of Melbourne, who spoke on 'Cultural Transformation in Post-War Melbourne'. He spoke on questions of immigration and national character and the too glibly answered responses of today, compared to the interaction that occurred between Australians and the refugees and émigrés during the 1940s and 1950s.

Bendigo (Vic)

The November meeting was a celebration of all things Doctor Who. A fun filled evening for children of all ages with costumes, competition, quizzes, and facts with doubles passes to the Discovery Science and Technology Centre and other prizes made available.

Altona (Vic)

An Illustration Competition for student members of the libraries from Prep to year 12 was held by the Friends of Altona Libraries recently. An Awards ceremony was held in November and prizes and certificates were presented to the successful participants. Children's author Adam Wallace provided the entertainment.

Wagga Wagga (NSW)

Friends have sponsored the purchase of a Home Energy Audit Kit, one of 5 being purchased to allow residents to check their own home appliances for energy efficiency. This program instigated by Climate Rescue of Wagga Wagga, who are funding one kit, the City Library and the Council the others. The kits will be available for one week loan. Friends made a payment of \$350.59 for the kit.

Wingecarribee (NSW)

The February function saw author Jenny Ferguson discuss her new book *A year in my garden*, recounting her latest horticultural and culinary endeavours at Whitely, in Sutton Forest. She was in conversation with David Smith, well-known editor of *Highlife*.

The March meeting saw Peter Nelson, Manager of Administration and Library Services speak about his visit to Wingecarribee sister city in China and its new library.

Wagga Wagga:

"Friends have sponsored the purchase of a Home Energy Audit Kit, one of 5 being purchased to allow residents to check their own home appliances for energy efficiency."

Friends around Australia

News, Events & Ideas...

Port Macquarie (NSW)

Drinks with Di Morrissey was held at Port Macquarie Library in November. Also, every year the Friends provide a book voucher to each local primary school as a reading encouragement award. These are usually awarded to the pupil of the school's choosing at their end of year celebrations. When the awards were first introduced, Friends members would present the awards in person, however, we now ask that the school present the awards on the Friend's behalf. The Port Macquarie Friends believe the activity is very important for both literacy and library promotion.

Balmain (NSW)

On Saturday 21 November the Friends provided an opportunity to make a selection from over 1,000 books being made available to the library by local bookshop, Hill of Content. If the items selected were not part of the library stock, then they would be automatically purchased by the Friends. This was part of a \$10,000 donation made possible by the Balmain Friends.

The December meeting heard award winning documentary maker, Curtis Levy speak on some of his films – *The Matilda Candidate*, *The President Versus David Hicks*, and *Hephzibah*.

Salisbury (SA)

December meeting saw the Mayor, Gillian Aldridge launch the Oral History Book – *A Tale of Two Suburbs, Salisbury North and Mawson Lakes*. The Friends of Salisbury Library were a major sponsor for the project.

The March meeting was an opportunity to help choose books for the library. A selection of adult fiction and non fiction books supplied by Dymocks Northpark at Prospect was available to choose from. Friends have the opportunity to put their name down for these new titles.

Barossa (SA)

The 2009 Local History Competition saw 149 entries where some of the winning entries are on display in Nuriootpa Library.

A Story Book Picnic is planned for April at the oval, Seppeltsfield Winery. This is one way the Friends encourage literacy and a love of books. Reading, story-telling, clowns, brass bands, face-painting and a second hand book stall amongst other stalls will be the entertainment for the day. Seppeltsfield Winery is supporting the event in a number of practical ways.

Willunga and Aldinga (SA)

The new book sale flag was flying proudly during the week of the January book sale. After a few lessons learnt in putting up the flag (some metres tall), the flag will be displayed every Thursday and Saturday for the book sales.

Council support in enabling restoration of the wrecked clipper ship *The Star of Greece*, totally destroyed on the reefs of Port Willunga in 1888, also had the support of the Friends. The spar was discovered in the storage area of a local business, restored with the support of council and presented to the library. On the day of the official launch Friends' members, together with local young people presented a costumed piece of drama and music recalling the wreck and its effect on the local community. Script and songs were the work of local writers. In the week prior to the ceremony members dressed in 18th century costumes and worked with an Adelaide TV station to commemorate this dramatic piece of local history.



"The Port Macquarie Friends believe the activity is very important for both literacy and library promotion."

"The March meeting was an opportunity to help choose books for the library."

FRIENDS OF ST CLEMENTS



The Friends of St Clement's was created to help people support the future of the Monastery at Galong (NSW).

When we look at St. Clement's today, we are immediately conscious of the large red brick building which has embellished the surrounding countryside for nearly a hundred years. The Monastery, which includes the Retreat Centre, is named after the Austrian-born Saint Clement Hofbauer (1751-1820). He joined the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer while Saint Alphonsus was still living but never actually met the saintly founder. He was the first non-Italian Redemptorist and is responsible for the spread of the Congregation beyond the Alps into Europe and the New World.

St. Clement's at Galong became a home for the Redemptorists in 1917, when "Galong Castle" and its surrounding 800 acres, the home of "Ticket of Leave" convict Ned Ryan, was left to them by his son, John Nagle Ryan M.L.A. From 1918 to 1975 St. Clement's was a registered secondary College. Since the close of the college in 1975, St. Clement's has opened its doors as a popular Retreat Centre.



By becoming a Friend of St. Clement's, you are helping to keep Galong as a heritage icon and as an environmental sanctuary. You can do this either by adopting an established tree and so providing for its care and ultimate replacement or by planting a new tree in the many groves to be established.

FRIENDS OF ST. CLEMENTS



The tree will be your title to become a Friend of St. Clement's. It can also be a gift to:

- celebrate a birth or marriage
- remember a loved one
- mark a birthday or anniversary
- become a friend of the environment

All trees will be recorded on a database, indicating the name of the donor/recipient and the location of the tree within the sanctuary and a gift card is available upon request.



Have Friends of the Library groups thought of a program which allows people to donate a tree, around the library or in the local community, perhaps in partnership with other environmental goals of the Council.

"By becoming a Friend of St. Clement's, you are helping to keep Galong as a heritage icon and as an environmental sanctuary."

WHO YOUR FRIENDS ARE

Why Friends are Important

- Because library services – all day, six-days per week, staffed by accredited librarians at all branches – are vital to life-long learning for all residents, to closing the digital divide, and to neighbourhood stability and revitalization
- Because our branch libraries are a rich but often overlooked community resource
- Because the library operating budget does not cover all the needs of our diverse neighbourhoods

What Friends Do

- Promote the library and its educational, informational, and cultural resources
- Promote literacy
- Promote library programs
- Increase the number of library card holders
- Increase patronage and circulation
- Produce relevant community arts, cultural, and educational programs
- Communicate community interests and concerns to library staff and administration



- Educate local and state policymakers on issues facing the branch and entire system
- Promote civic awareness, neighbourhood pride and citizen engagement
- Raise funds to augment libraries' budgets for collections and programs that meet the needs of diverse communities

What Friends Provide

- **Community strengthening:** serving as a conduit for people from a variety of ethnic and social groups to enrich each other and the neighbourhood as a whole
- **Programs:** reading and computer literacy, book clubs, career strategies, English as a second language, gardening, health, arts and culture, and more
- **Collection Development:** raise funds for books, CDs, videos, periodicals, and other materials that serve neighbourhood and its needs
- **Volunteer Opportunities:** augment library staff and gain valuable work experience
- **Advocacy:** increase the visibility of the branch as a vital part of stable communities

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

– Margaret Mead

The Friends of the Free Library Philadelphia is an independent, nonprofit organization whose mission is to support the Free Library of Philadelphia. Through affiliate neighborhood volunteer groups, we promote cooperation and communication between the community and the Free Library and advocate for library services for all.

Friends RESOURCE BOOK

Daniel Ferguson

Due to demand – reprinted with new reduced price!

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- How to
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The authoritative guide and source book for Friends of Library groups in Australasia

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Tullamarine Vic 3043
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FOLA NEWS UPDATE

Published four times a year by Friends of Libraries Australia Inc
Locked Bag 1315
Tullamarine Victoria 3043 Australia
Phone + 61 3 9338 0666
Fax + 61 3 9335 1903
www.fola.org.au
Editor: Daniel Ferguson
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Production/Design: Chameleon Print Design
Printing: Aberdeen Press

FOLA COMMITTEE MEETINGS 2009/2010

10 March – Melbourne
May – Adelaide
August – Launceston (AGM)
8 December – Melbourne

2009/2010 FOLA Executive, Committee and Sponsors

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Vice President Kristina Barnett (SA)

Secretary/Treasurer Kristina Barnett (SA)

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