

Ann Ritchie, MSc, B App Sci, FALIA, AALIA (CP) Health Librarian. OGF Nomination

As a Civil Society Member of the Open Government Forum I would bring a commitment to the values of access to information that the OGP and librarianship share. I am able to provide a network of contacts from the library and information sector, with the full support of the peak body, the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA). There are 1500 public libraries in Australia, with more than 9.3 million members and 113 million customer visits each year. People look to libraries to provide fair access to information and the free flow of information and ideas, and we are ideally placed to connect the work of the Open Government Forum with all Australians.

Demonstrated support of OGP's [Mission and Strategy](#) and the [Open Government Declaration](#)

Open government and unfettered access to information have never been more important for ensuring good governance in a democracy, which is dependant on:

Availability of comprehensive and accurate information about government decision-making so citizens can make informed choices and keep governments accountable;

High quality, research-based evidence and data to inform policy-makers, legislators and regulators;

Public servants' ability to consult with citizens, provide governments with unbiased advice, and implement policies that are based on transparent decision-making;

All levels of government using, with integrity, the communication systems and media that are intended to inform the public, and the repositories of the public's data which are entrusted to their custodianship.

Trust in government and public institutions is built on openness, transparency and accountability. At its most basic level, trust will be eroded and a democratic system of government will not function effectively if false or deliberately misleading information are more readily available than correct and verifiable information. In the current 'connected' environment of social media and other online tools, there is a risk that these channels may be used to spread false information and 'fake' news. Education about trusted sources and verifiable information is one way of mitigating this risk. The recent launch of the 'opt out' mechanism of recruitment for the My Health Record has provided an opportunity for public and health/hospital libraries to make available information about the reasons for staying in or opting out of the system.

Expertise relevant to the Open Government Partnership, including existing or probable future Australian Open Government commitments

I have the capacity to disseminate information and raise awareness of OGP initiatives across the library network. I have a deep understanding of the principles of information and data management, particularly as they relate to evidence-based policy and practice.

As a consultant and researcher, I have conducted projects that involve engaging with diverse stakeholder groups.

Board level experience as a long-serving member of the following: the National Library of Australia's Libraries Australia Advisory Committee, from 2010 on; Palliative Care Knowledge Network (CareSearch) Management Group, from 2012 on; ALIA Board of Directors, 2002-08; Editorial Advisory Board of the *Health Information and Libraries Journal*, from 2001 on; inaugural chair, Continuing Professional Development & Workplace Learning section, International Federation of Library Associations, 2001-05.

Demonstrated ability to engage broad and diverse community networks

As above, the ALIA networks create opportunities to reach out to many who would not normally be exposed to OGP initiatives.

A personal example of my ability to engage with the community is evidenced by my role as Director, Library and Literacy, at Barwon Health (2013-17), where I managed the Consumer Engagement Unit. We coordinated 70 volunteer Consumer Representatives who were consulted on all aspects of Barwon Health's service development and delivery, including consumer information provision; we established the Health Literacy Champions programme to advocate for health literacy in the community and within the health service.

Previous experience working with and influencing government

I have 30 years' leadership experience in the library and information world, partly as a public servant, while other roles have been in government-funded and membership-based organisations. Most recently, I have contributed to the ALIA submission that was recognised in *Australia's National Digital Health Strategy*.

The desirability of maintaining some continuity between successive Forums, balanced with the desirability of reaching new communities and reflecting emerging open government priorities

Originally from Perth, I have also lived and worked in the WA wheatbelt, Canberra, Darwin, and Geelong, and now reside in Melbourne. I have wide personal, community and professional networks that would enable me to bring diversity to the Forum; as a new member, I would bring fresh ideas and different perspectives.