

PUBLISHERS LIAISON COMMITTEE

Fay O'Grady

Coordinator

Sale of Brooker's Law Group

Law Book Company has agreed to buy Brooker's Law Group Incorporating all legislation publishing, annotation and support service. Brooker's Law Group will be an independent business unit of Law Book Company and will retain its current name and its operational structure.

The other Brooker's division, including office products, printing and the Brooker Gallery, will continue as an independent group with a new name and with Stuart Brooker as working proprietor.

Brooker's Law Group in its new form will remain very much a New Zealand based operation with New Zealand management. All Brooker's customary points of contact will continue uninterrupted.

If you have any queries on what the sale means to you, Brooker's toll free phone line is 0800 732 766.

More Than a Gripe - Less Than a Groan

1. CCH Binders become too full before they are ever replaced.
2. Law Book Company's annual invoices are showing a 15% increase.
3. Melbourne's Butterworths representatives are rarely seen at their clients' libraries.

4. Butterworths lack of stock held in this state is causing inconvenience to clients who have to wait for distribution from Sydney.
5. International Business Communications' "Foreign investment and exchange control" publication has a new service. This service is almost the same as the previous service. Is the new cover necessary? Is it worth the charge of \$275.00?

Current Awareness

Pennington, C. "The Best of Times, the Worst of Times : A CD-ROM update". (1994) 16 *The CRIV Sheet* 12 in (1994 May) 25 *AALL Newsletter*.

While this article concentrates on American materials on CD-ROM there is an interesting paragraph on search engines/operating software. They have found that in the last year there were at least 80 different search engines used for CD-ROM products. This number has now increased to over 100.

Fifteen search products hold 50% of the market with the big two, Folio, a product of Mead Data, and Premise, of West's Publishing holding 30% of the legal market.

Letters

■ **Rod de Beer**

Marketing Director
Butterworths

I'd like to thank Fay O'Grady for the opportunity to respond to the gripe/groan items concerning Butterworths Victorian representation and stock levels.

On the question of personal representation in Melbourne, I urge you to contact me if you feel that you are not receiving the service which you expect from Butterworths.

Our Victorian Sales Centre is a showroom of Butterworths local and selected imported titles. In most instances we should be able to meet your needs from shelf stock. All other imported titles and other publisher titles can be supplied overnight from the Australian Legal Bookshop if contact is made with the Victorian Sales Centre before 2 00 pm.

Please call me on (02) 335 4312 if you would like to discuss either issue.

Diskrom Hotline Charge

■ **Anne Gardner**

Minter Ellison, Western Australia

The ALLG (WA) Branch received a number of complaints from its members regarding the recent introduction of a hotline service fee by Diskrom and has written to David Eagle of Computer Law Services expressing our concern. I have reprinted an extract from our letter to see if anyone else has the same concerns and to encourage you to write to Diskrom. We haven't received a reply as yet but the letter was only very recently sent.

'Although the charge itself is not large in relation to the cost of the CD-ROM databases you provide, most of our members feel this fee is unwarranted as hotline support should be inclusive in their subscriptions. Of all the online and CD-ROM databases we subscribe to including Info-one, Lexis, Dialog and Lawnet to name just a few, Diskrom is the only service that imposes a charge for hotline support.

Many of the users of Diskrom services felt that in a large percentage of cases the need for hotline support has been due to there being a software or documentation problem. Technical backup to your products should be an inclusive part of your service as we expect when we subscribe to the products that they perform as they are supposed to.

Finally, the invitation of the ALLG convenors to Canberra last year to view your operations gave many of us the impression that Computer Law Services was a growing company that is financially sound. The imposition of this charge belies this impression.

We would appreciate it if you would reconsider the necessity of a hotline support charge amongst the users of your databases.'

■ **David Eagle**

General Manager
Diskrom

Diskrom's recent introduction of a charge for our Hotline service evidently disappointed some customers, and I appreciate you, Ruth Bird and Margaret

McAleese raising your concerns on behalf of ALLG members.

I would like to clarify some aspects of the service and our policy, and to introduce an extension that may better suit some subscribers.

- The Hotline service is free for any issues that relate to problems with Diskrom products. This includes installation problems or missing data, matters which are now substantially resolved.
- It is not obligatory to subscribe to the hotline service. We recommend that new subscribers do subscribe to the Hotline (and over 99% do), particularly for the first year as they learn the systems. Some subscribers do not utilise the Hotline service at all, others do so extensively.

Many people apparently were not aware that the Hotline provides a wide range of assistance, including general queries about legislation progress and about computing matters unrelated to our products. As an indication, approximately 24% of calls seek assistance on search strategies, 7% are problem resolution, and the balance consist of computing issues, legislative enquiries, and other matters not directly related to Diskrom products.

There are, however, a number of customers who believe the Hotline policy is not suitable for their situation, and in order to be responsive to these customers I am pleased to introduce the following extension to the policy:

- Diskrom will provide tailored approaches for any customers who feel the standard Hotline charges are inappropriate for their situation. Any customer wishing to take up this approach is asked to contact our Customer Service Manager, Jacinta O'Brien.

As some of you have pointed out, all publishers attempt to recoup all their costs, and even when Hotline charges are not itemised separately, the costs of Hotline services are certainly embedded within the principal subscription charges. We chose to introduce an optional charge rather than increase subscription fees which would adversely affect clients with multiple subscriptions. Similarly, those people who do not use the service at all would have been (unfairly) asked to subsidise those who do. Most of you know that Diskrom's subscription fees have remained constant for several years, whilst we have steadily expanded both content and function. And we will continue to do so!

We have appreciated receiving feedback from the ALLG, and if there are further concerns about the Hotline charge, I would be grateful if readers would write directly to me or to Jacinta O'Brien.

I hope that this letter is responsive to the ALLG's needs. This year you will continue to see Diskrom rapidly increase the value for money provided within its services. We would be pleased if you could take these factors into consideration when examining each component of our total offering.

Western Australian State Print

■ Anne Gardner
Minter Ellison, Western Australia

The Western Australian Government has recently announced its plans for the privatisation of State Print and the future of the Law Publisher. These changes may affect anyone who has a subscription to Western Australian legislation or the online database Lawnet.

The Government has decided that even though it will sell off the State Print operation which is responsible for all government publications in WA, it wants to retain control over the Law Publisher to meet the needs of Parliament. This means that legislation will be published by the Law Publisher (as is the case now) but not necessarily distributed via State Print which will be privatised

The ALLG (WA Branch) Committee recently met representatives of the Law Publisher in order to discuss these future changes. At this stage I am unable to report conclusively on how legislation will be distributed to secondary clients although the Law Publisher will probably take over this role. As the legislative database Lawnet comes under the control of the Law Publisher they did not foresee any problems with continuing to provide this service either

It is still unclear what the future of the WA Law Publisher will be but what was clear from this meeting is that this is a very uncertain time for all the staff of State Print. I will ensure that you are kept informed of any further developments.

Announcements of New Looseleafs

■ **Helen Culshaw**

Law Librarian, Flinders University

Timing of the announcement of new looseleaf services in publishers' lists is something that could be managed in a way which could be more beneficial to both publishers and librarians. Most law firm and government department libraries have financial years running from July to June. Budget estimates commonly are done in February-March. Thus issuing of a publisher's list with desirable looseleafs aplenty in June, results in some libraries having to wait a year before they can

place a subscription. If announcements of such new publications were made in December, or at least if some preliminary information were available then, librarians would be able to include them in budget estimates and publishers would sell more copies sooner!

VicStatutes Database

■ **James Butler**

Librarian, Supreme Court Library
Victoria

I am writing to you as Convenor of the Publishers Liaison Committee to express my annoyance at the performance of CLS in producing their VicStatutes product

Despite the fact that Commonwealth legislation is updated monthly, VicStatutes is only scheduled for updating on a quarterly basis. This in itself is a problem but if the commitment were met, CLS would at least be maintaining its promises to its customers. Unfortunately, it is not meeting them at all.

The current VicStatutes product is the April release, which is in fact current to March 1994. It contains a consolidation of all Victorian Acts to March 1994, and includes commencement information available up to the Gazette published on 19 March. On receiving the July release, I was looking forward to having an updated consolidation, but in vain. The VicStatutes are still up to date only to March.

I contacted CLS to enquire why the Victorian consolidation had not been updated quarterly as promised. I was told that 63 Acts had been passed in the Autumn session, there were thousands of amendments and the consolidation would be available soon. (The number of amendments is surely not unusual

and is the normal result of a Parliamentary sitting). I then received a further telephone call to clarify this. In fact, the August disc will still only contain the April update. The September disc will contain the 63 Acts (by which time more may well have been passed) and we will not receive the consolidation until the October disc.

This will mean a 6 month delay in a consolidation of Victorian statutes which is disgraceful. If CLS can offer, and deliver, a monthly updating service for Commonwealth and NSW material (although not as current as one would wish) why should Victorians miss out?

It seems that CLS waits for a electronic version of the legislation to aid its updating, but the experience seems to suggest that this is not working.

While CLS persists in its current lack of service to Victorian clients I would certainly advise subscribers not to ditch their Anstat service which, despite the information being manually keyed, manages to be much quicker and more efficient.

■ **Una Doyle**

Marketing Development Manager
Diskrom

In response to the letter from James Butler (Supreme Court Library of Victoria), Diskrom Australia would like to outline the product development cycle we have planned for the VicStatutes database.

Firstly, we are migrating our consolidation system during this current quarter, and the new system will show gains in the currency of materials. As a consequence we can confirm that Diskrom will shift to a monthly

update service for Victorian Statutes. This monthly service will occur subsequent to the major consolidation release in September and so will be in effect prior to Christmas. Please be aware however, that in the two peak periods (July and January) the volume of consolidating may result in some lag until materials are fully current. We will keep you informed of our progress in the next few weeks.

Our future plans for the VicStatutes database include the addition of extra materials, and increasing the overall level of functionality of the database. Details of these enhancements will be announced as soon as scheduling has been confirmed.

Readers will be interested to know that the Autumn 1994 session has produced an abnormally high consolidation workload - there are approximately 4,000 amending operations, to be applied to around 400 Acts. By contrast, recent years have averaged around 4,500 operations per annum across 200 Acts. We do, however, accept the concerns raised by Mr Butler, and believe that the movement to a monthly service will meet users requirements.

It is very important to us to receive feedback from our subscribers - our recent customer survey proved to be most informative, and we will be addressing those issues raised in the next newsletter.

LEGAL PUBLICATIONS

New and Second-Hand Booksellers

Garden Plaza, 500 Bourke St, Melbourne
Ph (03) 670 3614 • Fax (03) 642 1653
Hours 9-10am • 12 30-2 00pm • 4 15-5pm
Other times by arrangement

*Agents for M F & C A. Lillas
Publishers of Victorian and Commonwealth
Evidence Acts Annotations*

AGPS/ACLIS Liaison Committee

The Committee met on Friday 10 June 1994 for its annual meeting. Unlike previous meetings, this meeting did not address general business, but the future strategic direction of AGPS:

Alan Law, General Manager of AGPS, spoke at length of how the public interest role of the AGPS had fallen into shadow, partly as a result of commercialisation, and that the vision for the future is for all Australians to have easy and affordable access to government information.

He outlined five key areas which would be receiving urgent attention :

1. Strengthening the public interest role of AGPS through an improved Library Deposit scheme
2. Improving the publishing and information standards of AGPS output
3. Increasing the amount of electronic publishing
4. Establishing a comprehensive central register of government information which would be freely available; and
5. Ensuring the widest possible range of distribution and access mechanisms for government publications

Mr Law stressed that the emphasis would now be on the adding of value to information being published and the targeting of specific areas of usage. Of special interest to law librarians, it was indicated that one area of value added information might be to add commentary to Commonwealth legislation as it is published. In addition, another area of opportunity is the electronic streamlining of various elements of the *Government Gazette* to suit specific markets

It was outlined that the focus of AGPS was to become the information managers for government, and as such, intended to become involved in the information function much earlier than they had previously. This may involve recommending titles for publication, being involved in the writing of certain information, design and style, as well as publishing. In essence, the service would no longer be the Australian Government Publishing Service but the Australian government information service.

The Committee now has an opportunity to provide real consultation to AGPS during this major change in focus. Discussion papers on the key areas written by AGPS will be sent to the Committee for comment shortly. Members of the Committee have been given the responsibility of preparing the response to a nominated topic on behalf of the rest of the library community. Obviously this task will involve a great deal of consultation. The topics and people responsible are as follows:

- Library deposit schemes - Anne Miller
- Public libraries - Derek Whitehead
- Electronic publishing/copyright - Yvonne Butler
- Central Register - Denise Bird/Pam Dunlop
- Standards - Peter Clayton

Members will be invited to comment through their State Convenors, so please start thinking about the issues. The timing at this stage is entirely dependent upon AGPS releasing the discussion papers, but it is envisaged that comments will be sought within the next few months.

The other issue of significance to law librarians was the announcement by Michael Harrington (Manager, Commonwealth Information Services) of a proposal to create a single legislation database that is intended to be the authoritative source about Commonwealth legislation and legislation proposals.

The tentative date for implementation of the database is July 1995, which is not long given the size of the project. Michael is to be commended for his initiative as the proposed database promises to be of enormous value to all law librarians and may reduce the amount of duplication currently occurring in many libraries because such information is not currently readily available.

In addition, Michael announced the publication of three titles that will be of interest to all law librarians:

- *Commonwealth Repealed Acts 1901-93 (to be published every 2 years)*
- *Australian Government Acronyms and Abbreviations*
- *Annual Catalogue of Commonwealth Publications*

Finally, the meeting was also given a demonstration of the 1994-95 Commonwealth Budget which was released on disk for the first time this year. For all of those librarians who have queued outside the bookshop on Budget night and then had to struggle back with multiple volumes, the Budget on disk is a welcome release. Although it was not available in a network version, it is currently being developed, and has the potential to be of benefit. AGPS say that sales of the disk were disappointingly slow, so for those librarians who have been wanting the Budget in an electronic format for so long, your feedback is required.

AGPS is poised to move into a new and exciting phase of operation, and the Committee is excited at the prospect of being involved with this development. We applaud the direction being taken by AGPS and look forward to being able to provide valuable input from the library community.

Yvonne Butler

The Information Source

Publishing

Two Volumes Please

According to *Legal Research in Australia and New Zealand* No 1, May 1994 p5, a second edition of Davis, JLR & Greig, DW *Law of Contract* is expected mid 1995. As the first edition was 1542 pages, I do hope the second edition will come out in two volumes such as Dicey & Morris *Conflict of Laws*, 12th edition, London: Sweet & Maxwell, 1993 at over 1602 pages.

Alternatively publish the second on thinner paper, although I prefer the former option.

Full Disclosure Please

In the publicity for Layton, LP & Steinwall, R *Trade Practices Act 1974*, Sydney: Butterworths, 1994 there was little publicity for the fact that it is a reprint from *Butterworths High Court and Federal Court of Australia: Practice and Procedure* (Looseleaf) Vol 3.

The only link I saw indicating this was from the Australian Legal Bookshop Book News. Would you have bought it if you had known the above? This seems a repeat of criticisms levelled at Butterworths in (April 1975) No 8 *ALLG Newsletter* pages 1-2.

Australian Current Law Fast Law - Three Versions

Did you know Butterworths publishes three versions of *Australian Current Law Fast Law*? One for NSW and ACT and two for the other states. This only came to light when I was discussing something in ours with someone in South Australia and the information was not in theirs.

Colin Fong

Allen Allen & Hemsley