

NATIONAL CONVENOR'S NOTES



The National Committee of the ALLG met in Sydney on 25 November to discuss a range of issues which have arisen over the past twelve months and to look ahead to the Conference

in 1995. A more detailed report will appear in the next issue of *ALL*, together with a financial statement; however I would like to note some of the matters discussed in my column this month.

The *Directory* will be updated in April 1995, and both the update and *Directory* will be available to members only. It will be available in ASCII format with field labels so members can load it into Inmagic or other databases. We have decided not to sell the listing to any third parties, although this does not preclude states from selling their own lists.

It has tentatively been decided that the *Australian Law Librarian* will be edited by the South Australian Group from 1996, for a period of two years.

Planning for the 1995 Conference appears to be going well, although the call for papers has not elicited as good a response as we had hoped, given the enthusiasm of members last year to reintroduce a specific law stream to the Conference. If you have a paper in mind could you please contact Colin Fong at Allen Allen & Hemsley to indicate your interest? It shouldn't be left up to a few to take the initiative - there are many interesting things going on in our libraries, and we should share these with our colleagues.

The National Committee resolved the thorny question of conference seeding funding and profits. It was decided that seeding funding be treated as an underwriting loan to the state organising a conference, and be repaid to the national fund prior to the distribution of any profits. This will then ensure that seeding funding is always available for future conferences no matter what the dollar amount of the profit (if there is one) is from any conference.

It was also decided to provide an amount from the national fund to assist libraries involved in the Pacific Twinning project with the cost of freight and postage. This decision, and the amount involved, is to be reviewed annually, and guidelines for material acceptable to the project will be provided to members of the scheme.

We also discussed whether my role as National Convenor should continue now that I have left the library to take up the position of Practice Development Manager at AR&H. The National Committee felt that for the sake of continuity I should stay on in the role until the next Conference, and I undertook to continue to devote my best efforts to the position. I am fortunate to have a good network and support base in Victoria, and will continue to provide a central focus for the ALLG.

In April 1995, prior to the Conference, we will call for nominations, not only for a National Convenor, but also a National Secretary/Treasurer, as required by our Constitution passed at the last Conference. Could you please give consideration to nominating yourself or a colleague for one of these positions when the time comes?

The Committee noted that whilst some of the recommendations made by Rob Brian to the NLA were adopted, we were disappointed that the major recommendation of employing a law subject specialist devoted to the law collection was not accepted. We commended the NLA for the initiatives now underway in a range of areas, and Roy Jordan was congratulated on the excellent level of service he provides to law librarians throughout the country.

Other issues discussed included the ongoing role of the Publishers Liaison Committee, brochures, state events, the Parliamentary Database service, Diskrom's hotline charges, and state dues to the national fund (which will remain at \$2 per member in 1995).

The National meeting was most productive. Thank you to all state convenors for their time.

and contributions, and to their employers for allowing them the time to participate. We were also delighted to be involved in the ALLG (NSW Division's) twenty-fifth anniversary dinner held at Allen Allen & Hemsley the previous night. It is a matter of great pride that our group has grown to be a recognised and effective national body from its inception as a small self help group in

Sydney in 1969. Two of the founders, Lynn Pollack and Rob Brian, were suitably feted on the evening.

Until next time, may I wish you all a happy, safe and relaxing festive season, and all the very best in 1995.

RUTH BIRD - NATIONAL CONVENER

LETTERS

A Note of Appreciation

The Editor has graciously agreed to my using the columns of the *Australian Law Librarian* to express my enormous debt of gratitude to all those responsible for their kind words at the Anniversary Dinner and for the magnificent crystal balls presented to Rob Brian and to me as mementos of our 25 years in the Group.

It seems strange to be honoured for the joy of sharing 25 years of friendship and mutual support with so many inspired and inspiring legal information specialists. I have deliberately not used the word law librarians as in the early days we were conscious that many of the most valued members of the Group were not librarians and we were keen to draw on their energies and experience. Many may not agree with me but I believe that the richness and the diversity of our membership stimulated a remarkable range of significant achievements given our lack of a formal constitution and lack of funding. I was delighted to see on Thursday night that that richness and diversity of membership still pertains and that the members of the Australian Law Librarians Group of today are as inspired and inspiring as their counterparts in the 1960s.

We received tremendous support from the publishers, from the Law Foundations and from our parent bodies in the early days of establishing the Group and, with Rob's extraordinary leadership and financial skills, miracles were achieved from an almost non-existent financial base. From the report of the 'trade fair' in Melbourne I can see that Rob's entrepreneurial skills are reflected in the current Executive and it is clear from their professional approach and

ingenuity that we can expect even greater achievements in the future.

It is a far cry from our first roneoed Newsletter in 1973 to the excellence of today's *Australian Law Librarian* and there have been innumerable dedicated Editors and their staff who have devoted hours and hours of their time and energy to produce what is, for most, a labour of love to bring forth what, for me, has always been and continues to be the one item I never put down until I have skimmed the contents the minute it arrives. As it stands today it is undoubtedly a top quality journal and those responsible should be very proud of their achievement. I look forward to the days, which is not too far away, when we will receive our copies over the Internet complete with the colour illustrations!!

The Internet, the reality of the distributed national collection and now the exciting developments planned by the joint venture between the National Library of New Zealand and the National Library of Australia offer incredible opportunities for the future which add a whole new dimension to the fellowship we have built up through the *Australian Law Librarians Group* and through our association with the *International Association of Law Libraries*, I envy those of you who are just embarking on your careers and I will watch with endless fascination what I know will be the outstanding achievements in the future in this exciting and rewarding profession where every day brings new challenges and new ideas.

Thank you for your kind thoughts, your good wishes and for my treasured crystal ball. The pleasure has been all mine!

Lynn Pollack

Law Courts Library, Sydney