

NATIONAL CONVENOR'S NOTES



National Identity

One of the more interesting chores you encounter when taking on a new position is to read through all the correspondence and files

that have gone before. Ruth sent me several boxes of paperwork which at first looked so daunting I have to admit that it took me a little while to get to them. But once I did, it made interesting reading to look back at how the position of national convenor has developed and some of the issues the ALLG as a national group has dealt with.

There have been discussions over whether we should be an "association" or a "group", whether each of the states and territories should be called "divisions" or "branches", whether we should have a closer association with ALIA and so on. One of the things that struck me was the increasing national identity that has developed over this period.

Each of the national convenors we have had since the position was first established, has been full of ideas and initiative for the direction of the ALLG as a national body. I feel very much the same way. The recent AGM in Sydney gave us the opportunity to see how active the state and territory groups are and what a powerful group as a whole we can be. Issues such as liaising with publishers over electronic resources highlight the potential we have as a national group if we work at this level. I'm not suggesting for a minute that we become only a national body (let's leave the State v Commonwealth issues for the politicians), as I think one of the great strengths of the ALLG is the involvement of so many law librarians in all the states and territories. On the other hand, I do think it is time that we follow up the ideas expressed in our constitution with some national policies and strategies.

Convenors' Meeting

One of the first such national policies will be developed concerning electronic publishing. In order to lobby for equitable prices, appropriate licensing agreements and standardised software the ALLG will be developing an electronic publishing strategy. This issue has been discussed at the individual and state levels for some time and has regularly featured in the Publishers Liaison column. Our recent AGM highlighted the need for a more focussed strategy and it is to this aim that the ALLG convenors will meet in Melbourne in early December. We are hoping that this annual meeting will be successful in producing a strategy that takes into account all the concerns and ideas that have been raised by law librarians around Australia with regard to electronic publications.

In addition to this key issue, the convenors' meeting will give each of the state and territory groups the opportunity to discuss a number of other issues of national relevance. Some of the items on the agenda include suggested uses for national funds, the creation of national publications based on some of the excellent material from the state groups, the ALLG logo and letterhead, and the inaugural Law Librarians' Symposium to be held in Melbourne in 1996. One of the things I would also like to promote is an ALLG presence on the Internet. We will be looking at developing an ALLG home page with input from all the states and territories.

Although the pre-Christmas rush seems to start earlier each year, the various convenors felt it was important to meet sooner rather than later to decide on some of these key issues. And I myself look forward to getting my teeth into these as soon as possible. So best wishes for the Christmas season, and I will report in the New Year on the outcome of our meeting.

ANNE GARDNER - NATIONAL CONVENOR