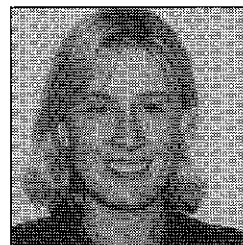


## ***Marketing the Administrative Appeals Tribunal Library Network***



### **Susan Heath**

Manager, Library & Information Services  
Administrative Appeals Tribunal, Brisbane

### ***The Administrative Appeals Tribunal***

The Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) is an independent body which reviews, on the merits, a wide range of administrative decisions made by Commonwealth Government Ministers and officials, individuals and other tribunals. The Tribunal can only review decisions that it has been given specific jurisdiction to review. Currently the Tribunal's jurisdictional base covers 274 separate enactments and spans a diverse range of areas including taxation, social security, corporations, veteran's affairs, superannuation, civil aviation, customs, freedom of information, bankruptcy and student assistance.

### ***The AAT library network***

As part of its structure the Tribunal has a national library network which provides library and information services to 216 tribunal members and staff. The library network is comprised of the Principal Registry Library located in Brisbane and district registry libraries located in Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Perth. The Principal Registry Library is responsible for national policy and standards, national systems including HORIZON and AATDEX, the Tribunal's computerised decision research system, cataloguing, budgeting and purchasing for the whole network and the provision of a range of national current awareness services. District registry librarians are responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of their libraries including reference services and collection development. The Tribunal also participates in the joint Commonwealth court libraries in Hobart and Darwin.

The library network's client groups include tribunal members and staff and parties and their counsel appearing before the Tribunal. The Tribunal's membership consists of a president, presidential members, senior members and members. The President, the Honourable Justice Jane Mathews, is a judge of the Federal Court of Australia and all our deputy presidents are lawyers. Senior members may be lawyers or may have special expertise in other areas. Members have expertise in a wide range of areas such as aviation, insurance, law, actuarial skills, medicine, valuation and military service. Appointments to the Tribunal may be made on a full-time or part-time basis.

### ***What we do to market the library network***

Although we are a national library network a mix of both local and national marketing strategies works best for us. Each of our registries has its own character and culture and a blanket national approach cannot be sympathetic to these differences. Although there are certainly some marketing exercises that are undertaken on a national basis there are many more activities organised and run solely in one district registry library at the initiative of the local district registry librarian.

### *Being social*

The inclusion of food into the marketing mix often makes a library tour, CD-ROM demonstration or library open house just that little more popular. A number of our libraries have hosted morning teas and well provisioned library open houses in conjunction with library tours and demonstrations of CD-ROMs and other library services. Maree Weicks our Sydney Librarian has a definite flair for this and her Australia Day library morning tea complete with home-made damper is still regarded as a high point in Sydney Registry's working year. Social occasions provide a great opportunity for library staff to mix with members and staff and to promote particular aspects of the library service or the library itself in an informal atmosphere. Currently we are in the process of implementing HORIZON, our computerised library management system Australia wide. The conclusion of this project will be cause to celebrate and HORIZON will be launched in the AAT with both champagne and morning tea.

### *Library publications*

Professional, relevant and timely library publications, in addition to providing clients with a whole range of essential information are also a useful tool to promote the library's services and resources throughout the organisation. The library network produces two national publications. The *Current Awareness Bulletin* and the *Bulletin of Recent Decisions, Legislative Changes and Media Reports*. The former is a value added current awareness service distributed on a fortnightly basis to all members and staff. In addition to the standard journal abstracting service, new acquisitions, and a speeches and papers list included in the publication, the bulletin frequently contains short articles prepared by a range of library network members about new and existing library services, covering everything from online databases through to the new electronic *Seacare Compensation Library* service.

The *Bulletin of Recent Decisions, Legislative Changes and Media Reports* is produced and distributed on a weekly basis to all members and contains summaries of the most recent Tribunal decisions, Federal Court appeals, details of new and amended legislation and abstracts of interesting media reports relating to the Tribunal. As the library manages the Tribunal's computerised full text decision retrieval system AATDEX, this bulletin also includes brief troubleshooting and searching tips for AATDEX. This bulletin is widely read in the Tribunal and clearly reinforces the library's role as the definitive source of a whole range of information pertaining to decisions, judgments and legislation.

To make sure these publications are always instantly noticeable in the huge pile of papers in everyone's in-tray the brightest coloured paper we can find is used for the front cover. We also have a standard library logo, designed from the graphics package included with Word, that always appears on library publications making them instantly recognisable as the library's.

As a network team effort we have also produced a whole range of library pamphlets and user guides that clearly describe our services, our resources, the technology available to library clients and how to use all of the preceding. Our *Case Law Research Manual* and our *Quick Guide to Commonwealth Legislation* are always particularly popular with new associates to the Tribunal. As these manuals and guides are stored electronically on a common drive accessible to all

library staff, they can be quickly and easily modified to suit the particular needs of any client group within the Tribunal. For example, Conference Registrars, Research Officers and members. This is a great facility as it allows library documentation to be easily made directly relevant to the widest range of library clients.

### *Computerised services*

As well as providing the standard computerised information services eg: LEXIS, DIALOG and SCALE, the library also manages AATDEX. AATDEX is a computerised index and text retrieval system for Tribunal decisions and appeals of those decisions heard in the Federal Court and High Court. AATDEX provides various search options that allow members and staff to locate AAT decisions dealing with particular matters.

Decisions are indexed and accessible by searching by parties, provisions, phrases, subject, decision number and a text search facility. AATDEX is accessible on every personal computer in the Tribunal and this makes it a valuable tool for promoting the library's skill and expertise in dealing with a whole host of decision information.

### *Training*

As a library network we provide a lot of training to both tribunal members and staff. We provide training across a wide range of areas including SCALE, case law and legislation research, CD-ROM services, the Internet and AATDEX. The provision of user training is also a useful means of promoting the library as it encourages appreciation for the value and professional skills of network members and the role of the library in the organisation.

The Tribunal's formal induction program for new members and staff now includes a full library orientation and library staff are required to sign off an orientation checklist to show that library orientation has been provided. The inclusion of the library into the formal induction program offers an excellent opportunity to ensure new members and staff are clear from their first day about the range of services and resources available from the library. The inclusion of the library into the induction program also tells members and staff that this section of the organisation will be important to them on a day-to-day basis.

Twice a year the Tribunal also runs a national three day training seminar for Tribunal associates. Tribunal associates are generally recent law graduates who work for a specific member and provide the member with a range of assistance including research work, attending hearings with the member, liaison with parties and so on. The library has a central role in the associates training seminar with one whole and a part day being given over to the library to run a range of sessions for associates covering everything from legal research skills through to the preparation of decision summaries. This session has proved to be a great opportunity for associates from all over the country to not only gain skills across a range of areas but also gain a clear appreciation of the library services available to them and the value of library staff.

### *Networking*

Being part of the daily life of the organisation and networking with the widest range of fellow staff is an important way to ensure that the library maintains a high profile and everyone knows who the librarian is and what it is they and the library do. Within the Tribunal, the library network takes whatever opportunities are available to fully participate in the overall activities of the Tribunal and particular registries. Ken Birch, our former Melbourne Librarian is a member of the Tribunal's national Equal Employment Opportunity Committee, Maree Weicks our Sydney Librarian attends regular staff meetings of the Tribunal's Policy and Research Section and all library staff regularly attend and participate in the widest ambit of Tribunal social events and meetings from christmas parties and industrial democracy meetings through to district registry meetings. Participating fully in the organisation also allows us to remain constantly abreast of what is happening in the Tribunal and this assists us to be proactive in the services we provide.

### *Marketing for public access clients*

In addition to providing library services to Tribunal members and staff our Principal Registry Library in Brisbane and Perth Registry Library are also open for use by parties before the Tribunal and their counsel. Like the Tribunal's membership this client group is diverse and has quite disparate levels of knowledge, expectations and service requirements. Public access clients can include barristers and solicitors through to unrepresented applicants and lay advocates. Marketing to these client groups is quite a different exercise to marketing to Tribunal members and staff

As part of its liaison program the Tribunal frequently hosts a range of liaison meetings and seminars including moot days to provide Tribunal user groups with a range of useful information about the Tribunal's processes and procedures. Whenever possible the library participates in these sessions and library staff have given talks, library tours and demonstrated library products such as CD-ROMs to a range of these user groups.

Later this year our Perth Librarian, Shelley Campbell, as part of the Tribunal's advocate program will run basic legal research seminars for a range of different legal and lay advocates from community legal centres and various government departments. The library network has also developed a range of library user guides specifically tailored to the needs of public access clients and these are freely distributed to public access clients and available within the library.

### *Conclusion*

Without a doubt the most important marketing tool for the AAT library network is the attitude and client ethos of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal's library staff. The whole library team is fully committed to fostering a strong service culture. At the most basic level the best way to market ourselves is for each individual in the library team to be always willing, ready and eager to provide professional and knowledgeable help of the highest quality. We are not shy in letting our clients know this.