

# PUBLISHERS' LIAISON

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## *Publishers' Liaison on the ALLG website*

Anne Gardner has been hard at work to make the website both relevant and useful to members. Four new sections have been added to the Publishers' Liaison section. They are:

- **Hot Topics** – alerting members to current issues being dealt with by Publishers' Liaison representatives
- **Legal Publishers** – providing links to the websites of legal publishers.
- **What's New from Publishers** – publishers are invited to post brief notices about new developments they believe will be of interest to ALLG members.
- **Reports** – hosts the full text of reports that may be of interest to ALLG members, for example, the group's submission on the Federal Register of Legislative Instruments.

## *Future development*

One possible addition to the website is a template that can be quickly filled in detailing the issue you wish to raise. This would then be emailed from the website to your national and/or state publishers' liaison representative and perhaps even a specified contact at the relevant publishing company. Its purpose would be to both save members time when registering concerns and to ensure that all the relevant people are aware that there is a matter that needs to be dealt with.

## *Your ideas*

If you have a suggestion about how the Publishers' Liaison section of the website can be enhanced, please contact Anne Gardner or Greig Williams

## *8th Asia-Pacific Specials, Health & Law Librarians Conference*

### *Legal resources in the new millennium: Tardis or doomsday?*

The organising committee at the Hobart conference did a great job of providing a forum with a difference. It provided an opportunity for ALLG members, publishers and other interested parties to discuss broad issues regarding legal publishing in the future. Each speaker on the panel was given a topic and a few minutes to speak on it. The audience was then asked to form into groups, discuss the issues raised and pose questions for the panel. During this time, speakers circulated throughout the groups and participated in discussion, before returning to the panel to hear the questions posed and comment on them. The organising committee undertook to prepare a summary of the session that they expect to release towards the end of September.

### *ALLG Biannual General Meeting*

A brief report was given at the BGM on the activities of the Publishers' Liaison Committee and some of the broad issues raised by members. The report covered the following matters:

- The objectives of the Publishers' Liaison Committee and asked for member feedback on any of the five broad objectives. The objectives were stated as:
  - a) to encourage constructive communication between legal publishers and law librarians;
  - b) to lobby vendors to address the range, number and quality of publications;
  - c) to investigate complaints and assist in satisfactory resolutions;
  - d) to address the need for more cooperation in publishing; and
  - e) to monitor prices.
- The meetings in January 1999 between the ALLG Convenor, NSW Convenor, National Liaison Coordinator and various publishers, to raise the

profile of the publishers' liaison roles at both the national and state levels.

- The strong feedback received regarding the need for more effective lines of communication between the representatives of publishing companies (eg sales consultants, helpdesk operators and customer service representatives) and the management of publishing companies. ALLG members feel that often what they communicate to the frontline representatives is not heard by company management.
- The feedback from members indicating that publishers need to establish better mechanisms for communicating problems so that customers are quickly aware of issues and can minimise their effect
- That publishers' liaison activities in the coming year would focus on a number of activities including:
  - a) developing the ALLG website as a communication tool between representatives, members and publishers;
  - b) strengthening ties between the national and state levels to help enhance the ALLG's impact as a group and increase our success on issues of concern; and
  - c) investigating alternative ways to run publishing forums.
- The need for members to raise unresolved issues with the publishers liaison representatives. Representatives cannot assist with problems unless they are aware they exist. Members were encouraged to keep their representatives informed.

## ***What's been happening?***

### ***Commonwealth of Australia Gazettes index***

Concerns have been raised about the quality of the latest indices (Consolidated index for 1998 and index 1/1/99 – 31/3/1999). The Western Australian division report there are numerous instances of incorrect indexing and lack of entries for important material and have written to Roger Brown, Assistant Secretary at Ausinfo.

### ***A Price Index for Legal Publications?***

Clare Cappa from Queensland has been looking into the Price Index produced by the American and Canadian Law Librarians groups. The index tracks prices and therefore assists as a monitoring tool. During the Hobart conference there was some discussion about the usefulness of this sort of tool to ALLG members. The issue of differing and negotiable prices structures from publishers was raised as one barrier to its production. If you have a comment regarding this issue, please contact Greig Williams. The Publishers' Liaison Committee is keen to receive member feedback.

### ***ALLG NSW Publishers Forum***

A capacity crowd of 90 attended the recent successful third annual Publishers Forum held by the Sydney Division at Jubilee Room, Parliament House. Publishers represented at the meeting included Butterworths, CCH, Desk Top Law, Federation Press, LBC Information Services, Prospect Publishing and TimeBase.

Questions ranged from issues such as why pay for material that is freely available on the Internet and the availability of retrospective legislation, to whether publishers use thesauri when compiling case headnotes. Ever popular queries on pricing policies and the future of legal publishing particularly in relation to the various formats of print, CD and online stimulated lively discussion.

### ***The swap to Folio 4 software***

Concern has been raised around the country about the LBC / Thomson decision to move to Folio 4 and the Butterworths decision against doing so. Law librarians subscribing to the electronic products of both publishing companies may now be forced to offer support and training in both versions of the Folio's software. Not an ideal situation, it could be suggested.

## ***Your state representatives***

Changes to contact details will be amended on the Publishers' Liaison section of the ALLG website at: [www.allg.asn.au/](http://www.allg.asn.au/)

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