

## TIP-OFF: News from the Executive Director

IT IS HARD to believe that two years' work, involving more than one hundred people can pass in the haze and excitement of one short week. All comments indicate that LAA22 was totally successful and thoroughly enjoyed, with many delegates claiming it was the best conference yet.

I must admit that I find it difficult to be objective (as do the staff) in view of the hectic schedule. A casual observer would be unaware of the extent of LAA business being conducted behind the scenes, beginning as early as Thursday, 19 August with a meeting of the Executive Committee, meetings of General Council, AACOBS Council, the Futures Committee, the Annual General Meeting, a meeting of the Continuing Education Officer and CE Liaison Officers, a luncheon meeting of the LAA22 Conference Committee and the 1984 Conference Committee, various divisional AGMs and finally, on Friday, 27 August, a meeting of the joint LAA/NZLA Standing Committee. Reports of some of these meetings will be appearing in successive issues of *InCite*.

Throughout the conference the profile of the LAA was kept at a very high level, beginning at the opening function with the presentation of our Redmond Barry and H.C.L. Anderson Awards to Mr James Crawford and

Miss Phyllis Mander-Jones respectively. History was then created on Monday with the launching of three LAA publications: *The Australian Librarian's Manual v.1 Library Documents*, *AUSLOAN: Australian Inter-Library Loans Manual* and *Library Services in Distance Education*.

A flurry of activity like a day at Paddy's Market surrounded the LAA 'charity' stall at all times. The volume of sales from the LAA stand exceeded all expectations, reaching about \$10,000.

It was certainly exciting to see how many people came to the stand. Unfortunately, the 'sales' activities were to the detriment of other activities by the staff. If our range of items continues to grow there will certainly be a case for student help in 1984. Thanks must go to those members of the Association who so willingly came to our help.

It is hoped that the weeks following the conference will be spent reflecting upon those few short (yet long) days by all in attendance. Such events are meant to fire us with renewed vigour and enthusiasm, think about our daily jobs, our friends, our conferences and most of all our Association, without which such a conference would not be possible.

Susan Acutt  
Executive Director



### Library charges

R. H. Pestell (*InCite* – 6 August, 1982) protests at the introduction of charges by public libraries and an increased charge for inter-library loan photocopies by the University of New South Wales. I would like to comment on some of the statements made.

Few libraries, I believe, would accept that a photocopying service in a public library should be free. The costs would be astronomical. The suggestion that computerised information services should be 'left in the hands of commercial organisations' if libraries cannot offer free searches would not benefit the public as far as costs are concerned. Charges made by commercial organisations, arrived at by meticulous costing plus a margin for profit, are – and would be – far higher than those currently made by libraries.

The University of New South Wales is accused of offending against 'the spirit of inter-library co-operation' because it intends to introduce a \$5 charge for interlibrary loan photocopies. The rationale for this increased charge is that it is unfair to the University to continue to provide interlibrary loans at a fraction of their true cost when budgetary restrictions are putting the collections of the University's Libraries at risk. For example, the Biomedical Library of the University cancelled serial subscriptions valued at \$16,000 in 1980/81. It is forecast that in 1983 there may be a \$40,000 shortfall in this Library's serial vote. One fifth, by value, of the Library's serial collection may be cancelled. Should then the Biomedical Library of the University of New South Wales use \$50,000 from its budget to provide 10,000 'free' interlibrary loans, or should it seek equitable compensation for its longstanding interlibrary loan services?

George Franki  
Biomedical Librarian  
University of New South Wales

## National bibliographic data base

AUSTRALIA was well on the way to the establishment of a unique computerised bibliographic source that all libraries could use, the Director, Networks Branch, of the National Library of Australia, Miss Judith Baskin, said in Adelaide on 25 August 1982.

Miss Baskin, President of the Library Association of Australia, was speaking at the Association's 22nd Biennial Conference. She said creation of a national bibliographic data base began with the introduction of the National Library's Australian Network (ABN) in November 1981.

Membership of the network was steadily growing and was already bringing about savings in library operating costs and enabling improvements in services to users.

She said that ABN would provide a single source for cataloguing all types of materials, not just publications, with instant access to the data base by computer terminals. Uniform high standards could be developed and maintained. Shared cataloguing would lead to economies and the freeing of resources for use in other ways.

Miss Baskin said that even during the ABN pilot project, when libraries were testing and learning to use the system, small savings had been reported. 'The National Library itself reports productivity improvements of well over 20 percent,' she said.

ABN can increase inter-library lending, reducing dependence of borrowers on large libraries, and opening up specialist collections for wider use, thus spreading the burden. She said there were obvious advantages in using the one data base to aid decisions on purchase.

'At the same time as verifying the item to be acquired the searcher can check whether the item is held by other libraries, and by which ones and a decision on whether duplication is desirable or not can be made on the basis of firm information. If libraries also use the data base to record items in order, the facility will be greatly improved.'

By August, Miss Baskin said ABN held 2.2 million bibliographic records, including books, journals and artworks, a fraction of the material that could be included. By comparison with other countries we are small but we still need access to the same range of information. Compare the United States with a population of 220 millions and an estimated 105,000 libraries with Australia's 15 million people and an estimated 12,700 libraries. Can we afford to ignore the economies and the potential of one data base for Australia?

### LAA Vouchers

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use only for inter-library copying'.

The LAA voucher scheme was a major item on the agenda for the meeting of General Council held on 20/21 August 1982. In view of the legal advice received, Council resolved:

- (i) to remove 'redeemable value' from the face of the voucher.
- (ii) LAA vouchers be sold to and redeemed for institutional members only from 1 October 1982.

Following further consideration of instituting new conditions the date has been deferred to 1 January 1983. This will allow institutions time to assess their use of LAA vouchers. No vouchers will be sold to or redeemed for non-members of the LAA after that date.

Another matter relating to interlending is that at its meeting on 20 August, the AACOBS Council resolved:

1. That AACOBS reaffirm its policy 60/76 opposed to charging for inter-library loans and use its influence to have this policy observed.
2. That AACOBS recommends to libraries that in those cases where they charge for inter-library copying, that the standard charge be three dollars to be instituted from 1 November 1982.

In discussion, AACOBS reaffirmed that this recommendation is not legally binding on libraries, and that all libraries must satisfy the provisions of the Copyright Act.

General Council of the LAA resolved to introduce a three dollar voucher as soon as possible. The General Treasurer and Executive Director are to determine the level of handling fee to be applied. Procedural changes to the voucher system will be circulated widely through *InCite* and to those institutions using LAA vouchers.

Susan Acutt  
Executive Director

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