

Letters

Respect wishes of Saudis

ALTHOUGH some people may agree with the sentiments expressed in *Incite* (no8, 16 May 1980) under the heading 'Death of a Princess', it should be remembered that librarians are also public servants, and, as such, have an obligation to serve the government in power, whatever their political persuasions.

On this occasion I believe it is politically wiser to respect the wishes of the Saudis rather than to insist upon our 'right' to examine material (which has nothing whatsoever to do with Australia or Australians). The Federal Government's decision to put the national interest before the individual's 'freedom' by opposing the screening of the film 'Death of a Princess' is a sound one.

There is a difference between offending a few individuals (in your own country), and offending one of Australia's major trading partners. The value of imports from Saudi Arabia in the year 1977-78 was \$355,220,000, and the value of exports was \$86,982,000.¹ Saudi Arabia also produces nearly 25 percent of the world's crude oil.

I believe there are times when Australia's overseas trade relations should take precedence over an individual's 'personal freedom' or 'right' to know. People of other countries are entitled to have rights, which should be respected. To do otherwise would be not only undemocratic but also uncharitable. 1 Yearbook Australia 1979 P.G. Longrigg Broken Hill, NSW

Archivists / records managers

TWO statements in the article 'College moves to boost archives' (*Incite*, no 8, 16 May) necessitate a sharp rejoinder.

Firstly, the Melbourne State College course will *not* 'become the only course in Australia to offer studies in both archives administration and records management'. The only full-time archives course in Australia, at present, is the Diploma in Archives Administration, offered within the School of Librarianship at the University of New South Wales since 1973. From the inception of the course, and to an increased extent in recent years, records management has been included in the course content. The emphasis in teaching records management has been on demonstrating the relevance of records management to archival theory and practice. Students are introduced to the fundamentals of records management theory and practice. They are also introduced to current records management practice in such institutions as the Records Management Office of NSW, the Australian Archives, and a variety of other governmental and non-governmental agencies.

The principal difference between the University of New South Wales course and the proposed Melbourne State College course is one of emphasis. The Melbourne course aims to produce both archivists and records managers.

At the University of New South Wales, we aim to produce archivists, but archivists who will also be aware of the principles and

techniques of information management in other areas, including records management and librarianship. We feel that, within the constraints of a one-year full-time, two-year part-time course, it is difficult to produce graduates who will be recognised by employers as specialists in both archives administration and records management, since each of these specialists requires intensive theoretical and practical training in its own right, just as does librarianship. (A two-year, part-time course in Records Management is at present offered at Sydney Technical College.)

Changes occurring within the broad area of information management make it imperative that students are aware of commonalities between specialised areas of information management without, at the same time, losing sight of the fact that there are important differences between the objectives, principles and techniques of different areas of information management.

Secondly, we are concerned about the statement that there is a 'severe lack of qualified archivists in Australia'. Certainly, there is no lack of *need* for qualified archivists. Many businesses, historical societies, local government councils, and similar organisations, could justifiably employ their own archival staff. Likewise, many government archival agencies need more staff to carry out their responsibilities. However, staff ceilings, lack of funding to employ professional staff, and, quite often, lack of awareness that archival work requires specialised knowledge and training, limit the opportunities for professionally-qualified archivists.

Since 1973, over 70 people have graduated from the Diploma in Archives Administration course at the University of New South Wales. The majority of these graduates are employed by archival institutions: many of the overseas students, and some of the Australian ones, were required to return to the institutions which funded and/or employed them; others have obtained employment with, principally, government archives or university archives.

Although on occasion vacancies have arisen which students could have applied for, if available, the number of such vacancies has hardly been enough to suggest a 'severe lack' of qualified archivists. If a 'lack' exists, it is occasional and unpredictable.

Certainly, the archival profession is very aware of the need to expand job opportunities for archivists, and much has been done in recent years to secure the employment of professionally-trained archivists in archival jobs. However, the kinds of constraints which do operate need to be recognised and realistically confronted.

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Title 'repugnant'

I HAD thought of commenting on the title of *Incite* when I saw the first issue, but as my time for active librarianship is past I let it go.

But since you have raised the matter in no5 I would like to say that my immediate impression on confrontation with the title was that it was badly chosen and repugnant. Had you called it the more conventional 'Insight' it would at least have indicated that librarians were deeply perceptive people whose opinions could be worth listening to.

The word 'Incite' points to rabble rousers, and may well antagonise the authorities who provide the money to keep us going.

Otherwise the newsletter is the best of its kind that the Association has put out for many years. E.M. Robertson Wauchope, NSW

Films for the deaf: only half a loaf

In *Incite* (no2, 22 February) you noted the NLA's recently published *Films for the deaf*. We have a group of partially deaf children in our High School, so I applied for the list, and have since been borrowing films. Perhaps I should be grateful for even half a loaf, but I am disappointed with the films listed.

I feel the selection criteria were wrong. The majority of titles are from the silent era; the remainder are ones where the sound is of minor importance. But selection by sound-track is too coarse.

Silent oldies for us are just oldies for the deaf; they have some interest for any viewers, but are here presented as the major diet.

The more modern films with disposable sound are likely to be clever or experimental, and can be hard to follow, and, again, are not specifically suitable for the deaf.

I am grateful for the list; films like *A chairy tale*, *Skaterdater* and *Neighbours* are great; but the claims implied by the list are exaggerated, and the selection gives the impression of being done on a technical basis (absent or disposable sound) rather than on the more professional and more sensitive grounds of suitability for the deaf.

Thanks, NLA, for half a loaf, but does anyone know of a better selection: more suitable and less pretentious? It might be more limited, for example, films made for the deaf, and successful modern films like the three above that communicate as well to both deaf and hearing people.

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Joint-use libraries — overseas success story

ALTHOUGH the subject of 'joint use' is outside my territory, I am moved to join in the fracas because of C. M. Pavey's statement (*Incite*, 2 May) about the failure of joint-use ventures overseas.

He may have the data to support his argument, but I do know of one successful case. I was for eight years associated in various capacities with a joint-use operation in Welwyn Garden City in England. A largish public library was built adjoining the library of a college of further education covering a wide range of disciplines. A door between the two libraries was left open except when opening hours differed (as in college vacation), and the customers of one library could walk into the other when their own library did not meet their needs. There was reciprocity of borrowing rights. When one library was closed, books could be fetched by staff of the other.

The two libraries operated separately, just as they would if independent. The two librarians were responsible to the County Council through different channels. Funding was separate.

The benefits to the users are obvious — each library doubled its stock. There was fine co-operation between the librarians, and a good deal of rationalisation and supplementation of stock and services.

The venture was greatly helped by geographical factors. The public library was on the street adjacent to the main shopping centre of the town, and the college library was at one end of the main college building (it may have been deliberately put there with this in mind).

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