

JOINT-USE LIBRARIES

A FEW YEARS ago those of us who have a particular interest in the development of what have been variously called 'community', 'school/community', and 'joint-use' libraries were in despair as there appeared to be no interest on the part of the profession in examination of developments of this type from other than a local viewpoint.

Yet as joint-use libraries increased in number so did the distress signals from individual libraries asking for guidance from the profession as a whole. As a group, we librarians were behaving as if by ignoring joint-use libraries they might go away but of course they did no such obliging thing; problems seldom do.

However, perseverance has won the day. Now it is happening all in a rush, and we might perhaps soon be in the luxurious position of having to 'rationalise' national and state-based activities regarding joint-use libraries.

National workshop

Firstly, at least chronologically, came the national workshop on 'Joint-use libraries in the Australian community' mooted for some years by the Working Party on User Needs of AACOBS and eventually funded by AACOBS itself once that body came to have R and D funds of its own. That workshop took place in August 1980, built on a series of state-based workshops, and was attended by invited participants including state-level adminis-

trators from the education and library fields, librarians and principals from individual joint-use libraries as well as a number of acknowledged 'experts' in both joint-use libraries and peripheral fields such as architecture and local government legislation.

From that workshop came a set of theoretical papers and draft national guidelines for the establishment and operation of joint-use libraries. These are currently in press at the National Library of Australia and will appear as part of the Network series. From the Workshop also came a series of recommendations for further action and it appears likely that AACOBS will form a Task Force to carry forward the recommendations, including the refining of the draft national guidelines compiled by workshop participants.

At the same time that AACOBS was holding the national workshop, the LAA was preparing to issue the statement on joint-use libraries. This statement appears as an insert in this issue of *Incite*.

Further involvement of the Association in this issue came as a result of a state-of-the-art paper on joint-use libraries which I presented at the LAA/NZLA Conference in Christchurch in January this year. It was clear from response to both that paper and the early draft of the LAA's statement which attracted much comment from members that individuals in the profession feel strongly the need to discuss the issue of joint-use libraries.

Christchurch resolution

It is to be hoped that the resolution passed at the final plenary session of the Christchurch Conference which called for the combined associations to seek funding for an evaluation of joint-use libraries from both a users' and administrative point of view will be acted on.

The recent activities described are, happily, supportive of each other and there has been a good airing of issues and some useful documentation which looks at the Australian situation as a whole.

However, although discussion of the issues is vital and it has taken us a certain distance along the way, I would contend that we will not progress much further without some empirical research as there are still many unanswered questions which cannot be resolved through simple exchange of ideas and views.

I therefore urge the Association and its members to ensure that the recommendation from the Christchurch Conference referred to above is acted on, so that we can eventually discover if the folk-wisdom surrounding joint-use libraries can be supported by objective evidence. We have accepted, *a priori* statements such as 'joint-use libraries work best in small rural communities, or rapid growth areas'. How do we know this?

Granted, that is where joint-use libraries have in the main been established, but how can we be so sure they would not work in, for example, an 'average' suburb, especially when we contend that joint-use service should be no less than that which would be available from separate facilities?

I suggest we need to question some of this type of assumption if we are to go much further with developing the concept of joint-use libraries, which are, after all, the only mechanism through which many members of the community can hope to receive library service.

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Kuring-gai CAE

STATE LIBRARIAN RETIRES

KENNETH ALLEN ROBERT HORN who has been State Librarian of Victoria since 1966 retires from that position on 7 May 1981.

Ken Horn is one of the small band of New Zealanders who have made significant contributions to Australian librarianship. He was born on 10 September 1916 and was educated at the Universities of Auckland and Canterbury where he graduated in both arts and music. His erudition in the classics and in music have served him and librarianship well. His urbanity, wit and ability as a raconteur have charmed and entertained those of us who have been fortunate to be close to him.

Ken's biographical details can be found in *Who's Who in Australia*. What is not to be found there are the details of his involvement in the development of the State Library of Victoria and the Victorian public library system.

The State Librarians' Council, of which he was Chairman, was entertained and informed by Ken at the dinner held recently in his honour, with a comprehensive and anecdotal account of his connections with the Victorian Branch of the LAA's submission to the Jungwirth Inquiry, his subsequent involvement with Sir John Jungwirth and his appointment as State Librarian. I hope he can now find time to write the 'true and authentic history' of those stirring times and his subsequent stewardship.



Ken Horn

The developments in both the State Library and the public library services in Victoria during his period of office are on record and represent a period of growth which set an example for the other States to emulate. Whilst the new State Library building so urgently needed in Victoria has not, as he had hoped, been the crowning glory of his career, Ken has much reason to be proud of his achievements.

We wish him well in his retirement.

Laurie Brown

Vic forced to cut services

ALTHOUGH THERE HAS been a dramatic increase in the use of the State Library of Victoria by the general public in recent months, the Library has been forced to curtail its services.

This ridiculous state of affairs occurred on 23 March when the Ministry for the Arts instructed the Library to reduce the penalty rates being paid to staff.

This has meant that the SLV cannot maintain all services and the following services have been cut: The art, music and performing arts library will now close at 6pm every day and will be closed at weekends; there will be no photocopying at weekends or after 5pm on weekdays, and people will have

continued overleaf