

'State Library's funding inadequate' Continued

access to newspapers housed in the basement only on weekdays.

These cuts are happening at a time when there is a significant increase in the number of people using the library's facilities. For example, the number of telephone enquiries in the first half of 1980 was equal to the total for the whole of 1977. A total of 12,583 people viewed microfilms of newspapers in the six months from July to December 1980 - this compares with 5,492 users in the previous months. Also, photocopying rose by 41.3 percent in the same period.

What the papers say

Letters from all types of people, particularly students, have been appearing in the Melbourne papers. Jeannie Zakharov, President of the Students' Representative Council, University of Melbourne, has this to say about the cuts in services: '... There is much important material which is available only at this Library (SLV), and the course work of many students will suffer. Some will have to change courses so that they can be assured of access to documents they need. Others denied such access midway through their studies will have great difficulties in completing their courses ...'

The Editorial in *The Age* of 28 March

reported that 'It appears the State Library is running out of money to pay overtime. According to the Arts Minister, Mr Lacy, this is the result of bad management of the Library's budget. He speaks as if he, as Minister is not responsible for his own employees. But the question of blame is secondary. Of more importance is that the work of scholars and students, particularly those forced by weekday employment or education commitments to use the Library at night, and on weekends, will be disrupted. The closure of so many vital facilities could well discourage those contemplating part-time studies. There is a chance that Cabinet will approve a small emergency allocation of funds to allow the Library to reverse some of the closures. But what is needed is an immediate allocation to rescue the reduced services.'

What the Branch says

Carmen Hannaker, President of the LAA Vic Branch, in a letter to Mr Lacy says: 'The Branch is appalled to learn that the State Library will have to reduce the penalty rates being paid to staff. The consequent cuts in evening and weekend services are particularly disastrous in that they affect part-time students who are already disadvantaged in terms of time compared to their full-time colleagues.

Evenings and weekends should not be considered "after hours" opening times for libraries. In fact, usage at these times is often greater than during the day. This particularly applies to weekend usage.

'Your Government is obviously failing to provide adequate funding for the Library if it is unable to continue its full services without having to implement these unfair and discriminatory cuts.

'We urge you to reconsider the directive instructing the State Library to reduce penalty rates being paid to staff'

VIEWPOINT

RECENTLY IT WAS my pleasure to visit one of our remoter branches, in Perth. It was most encouraging to find so much that one could comment on in a positive way - the major lasting impression being the positive attitude of the Branch as reflected in its program and its response to the expressed professional needs of its members.

If anyone should doubt the health of the Branch let me challenge any other Branch to attract over 90 people to its Annual General Meeting. On a per capita basis that figure is even more comforting and must surely give food for thought to those groups where member participation is at a struggling level.

Lest it be thought that there are no issues of consequence, let me hasten to say that there are problems of concern to the Branch - problems which members were prepared to discuss; concerns which they were anxious to express; policies which they wished to question. To me these are healthy signs, and in that category I include the meaningful discussions held with students in relation to fees and student membership.

My major purpose in visiting our WA Branch was to present the H.C.L. Anderson Award to the retired F.A. Sharr for his outstanding contribution to the profession. It was indeed an honour to make such a presentation to a man whose professional career was entirely devoted to the provision of service to people. He has certainly been an inspiration to librarianship not only in Western Australia but throughout the country.

The function was particularly significant in that it was also the occasion of the presentation of the F.A. Sharr Medal to the outstanding student of librarianship in Western Australia in 1980. This is an annual award which Mr Sharr presents to a candidate selected by the Branch. No more fitting occasion could have offered itself.

These reflections lead me to venture to assert that the profession in the West is alive and well!
Jim Dwyer, LAA President

Alumni association

The Department of Librarianship at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology are in the process of forming an Alumni Association. A steering committee has been appointed and the inaugural meeting will be held on 12 May. Tony Foskett will be the guest speaker at the meeting which will be held in the Dept of Librarianship at 7.30pm (wine and cheese 7pm). For further information contact Mike Ramsden (03) 345 2822.

Nat Book Council

THE NATIONAL BOOK COUNCIL is one of a number of bodies on which the Library Association has corporate membership. The Association is, in fact, one of the group of organisations which originally came together to establish the National Book Council and since then has been represented on its Governing Council.

The Council recently met in Melbourne in conjunction with the first ever International Trade Book Fair held in Australia. The Past-President and the Vice-President attended the meeting of Governing Council and the Annual General Meeting.

Matters discussed included perennial 'hard ones' such as restoration of a book post, the definition of 'an Australian author' or 'an Australian publisher' for the purpose of NBC Book Awards which have now increased to a total value of \$10,000.

Most exciting news was the appointment, with Literature Board financial support, of a promotions specialist, Mr John Curtain, publisher of *Australian Book Review*. He will be developing an active promotion campaign directed to NBC's 1981 objectives which have as their theme 'Promotion of the ownership and reading of books'. This is the first step in the development of a promotion program which aims to bring to the world of books a level of public consciousness similar to that of the *Life Be In It* program.

Guest speaker at the AGM was Martyn Goff, Director of the National Book League (UK). He rejected the view expounded by Dr Christopher Evans in his book *Mighty Macro* that by the end of the 80s the book will have gone into steady decline.

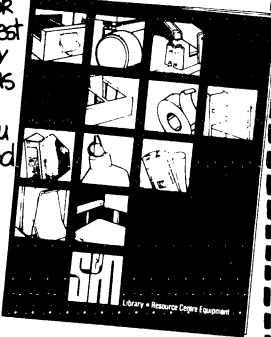
Martyn Goff quoted from a recent West German large scale survey which gave very encouraging results on reading habits and levels of book ownership. He reminded us that the book will be swamped by alternative media if it does not promote its own excellence and its particular advantages. He quoted George Steiner 'I go into a bookshop to get the book I didn't want'. Our libraries need more readers like that.

And we all need to support the work of the National Book Council. Your current State Chairman is: ACT - Mr Justice Else-Mitchell; NSW - Nancy Keasing; SA - Christobel Mattingley; TAS - Laurie Brown; VIC - Hilary Christie-Johnson; WA - Bob Sharman. The National Chairman is Dr Stephen Murray-Smith and the National President, Mr Justice Kirby.

W.D. Richardson
LAA Past President

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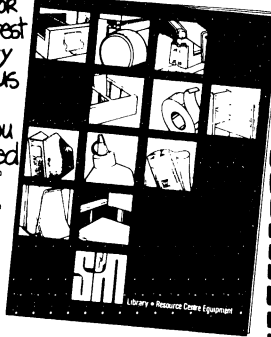


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