

Letters

The poofster menace

Cr Hugh Sanderson (reported in *Incite* no 17, October 2) is right to be concerned about the possibility that Australian boys will become poofsters and sissies if local councils don't allocate funds in the right ways. Poofsterism and sissyism are the two greatest menaces to the Australian way of life today, and unless local government does something decisive this country will go the way of all degenerate cultures and end up in the dustbin of history along with ancient Rome, the Aztecs, etc.

However, Cr Sanderson is right off the track in calling for councils to cut back on libraries and community arts programs and have children play outdoor games instead. Outdoor games are the root of the problem. Far from protecting us against the perils of poofsterism, outdoor sport is taking us straight into the abyss. Outdoor games, if not stamped out, are going to turn this nation into a cesspool of sissyism faster than you can say 'gay liberation'. The last thing this country needs is to have young, impressionable Australians spending their leisure hours watching one another cavort round sports fields and swimming pools practically naked, or hanging around dressing sheds, with all that entails, or playing body contact sports (has Cr Sanderson seen a Rugby scrum?), or making heroes of people with poofster names like 'Lillee'. In England, generations of public school boys have been subjected to a regimen of outdoor sport, and the result is that poofsterism is known as 'the public school vice' and Eton has a school song exhorting boys to 'pull, pull together, / with our bodies between our knees'. As for the myth that Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton – what Wellington actually said about his old Etonian troops was: 'I don't know whether they frighten the enemy, but by God they frighten me.' And what frightened the Iron Duke ought to terrify the rest of us, including Cr Sanderson.

What this country needs is not more sport, but less: not the poofsterism of the playing field, but the sedation of the study. In a word, it needs libraries. If this nation is to survive the rising storm of sissyism that threatens to engulf it, and if the minds and bodies of our youth are to be protected against the corrupting effects of the pavilion and the pool, local councils must act now, putting up libraries instead of sports centres, building bookstacks on the ovals, and getting the youth of the country away from the poofster sportsmasters and the cult of the body, and into the local library under the supervision of the middle-aged spinsters. Time is running out; unless local councils acknowledge their responsibilities and use every means at their command, starting with their libraries, to counteract the baleful effects of organised sport, this country is doomed.

John Small
National Library of Australia

Agencies to avoid

I feel I should warn my fellow librarians about the dangers of relying on 'Subscription Agencies' and certain 'Indexes'.

I happen to now find myself anchor person of a profit sharing group which puts out what everyone acknowledges to be a top quality Australian magazine on the arts, *viz*, *Dance Australia*.

Trying to sustain quality on a tight budget, I received my first shock when one subscription agency told me, in no uncertain terms, that the larger the percentage I gave them, the more chance we had of 'getting into the libraries'.

I know some libraries only subscribe to magazines which are on an Indexing list. So I wrote to one of the popular magazine indexers for consideration and received the following reply: *We do not index magazines until librarians request it*. Now how can librarians request it unless they see it? And who has time to write to indexers? No librarian I know anyway.

I will back our magazine *Dance Australia* against any similar on an indexed list. I invite any of my colleagues to put us to the test. I will send free back copies to any LAA member who requests them so they can judge our contribution to education and the arts in Australia for themselves.

I simply ask my fellow librarians to exercise their own professional judgement and not have this judgement made for them by vested interests.

Dally Messenger
Keysborough, Vic

GENERAL COUNCILLORS FOR 1982

Australian Capital Territory

MAXINE ROCHESTER, c/o School of Liberal Studies, Canberra CAE, PO Box 1, Belconnen ACT 2616.

New South Wales

JANET ROBINSON, c/o Office of Library Co-operation, 8th Floor, CAGA Centre, 8 Bent St, Sydney NSW 2000.

Northern Territory

MARGARET CLINCH, c/o Darwin Community College, PO Box 40146, Casuarina NT 5792.

Queensland

PIXIE CROOK, c/o North Brisbane CAE, Post Office, Aspley Qld 4034.

South Australia

JULIE DOW, 39 Thorngate Drive, Belair SA 5052.

Tasmania

TWILA HERR, c/o School of Librarianship, University of Tasmania, GPO Box 252C, Hobart Tas 7001.

Victoria

MARGARET CAMERON, c/o Library, Deakin University Vic 3217.

Western Australia

JUDITH WILLMOTT, 1 Gemmell Street, Bull Creek WA 6153.

The above people have been elected to represent your Branch on General Council in 1982.

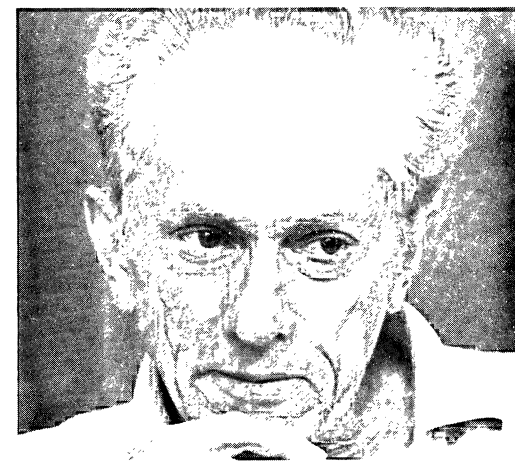
National Information Policy Seminar

OVER SEVENTY LIBRARIANS, public servants and business leaders from all states attended a seminar on National Information Policy held in Canberra on 7 and 8 December. Organised by the ACT Branch of the Association, the seminar was a conspicuous success.

Keynote address

Keynote speaker at the seminar was Bill Welsh, the Deputy Librarian of Congress (see *Incite* 16 October 1981). Bill spoke of the United States experience with the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS), and the 1979 White House Conference on Library and Information Services. A committee of that Conference was appointed to help implement its resolutions, and NCLIS appointed a Task Force to study the interaction of the public and the private sector, the 'information industry'. Its August 1981 report cautioned against the creation of an 'Information Czar'.

Cutbacks in government expenditure (a familiar story!) are now leading to user fees for federal services of all kinds. Welsh sees that 'within the United States, we will continue to have a pluralistic national information policy with participation at the local and State levels, at the national level, and with increased participation of the private sector in providing tailor-made information services . . . libraries will continue to be major conduits for information'.



Bill Welsh

A policy for Australia

Neville Hurst, First Assistant Secretary in the Policy Division of the Commonwealth Department of Science and Technology, looked at the problems of formulating a national information policy for Australia. Government responsibility for it is fragmented; an issue by issue approach, as adopted by the government in other areas, could be the best available.

He then went on to identify major industrial issues (technology, structural adjustment, national control, tariffs, management of infrastructure) and social issues (employment, privacy, access and copyright, cultural issues).

Frank Thompson, Manager of the University of Queensland Press, argued cogently against any 'big brother' approach which would impede the free flow of information. Picking up Bill Welsh's mention of the concern expressed about a US 'Information Czar', he was the first of several speakers to

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question whether Australia in fact does need an information policy.

This question was also raised by Tony Klingender, General Manager of ACI Computer Services, who was concerned that neither the public nor the private sector should be prevented from taking appropriate initiatives.

Roles

Harrison Bryan, Director-General of the National Library, spoke of the role of libraries in the national information area. He drew an important distinction between policy and planning: ALIC, for which he has great hopes, is involved in the planning process, as are most librarians' initiatives.

The Chairman of AACOBS Standing Committee, Bob Sharman, commented that, like Mark Twain's weather, national information policy was something that 'everybody talks about, but nobody does anything about it'. In AACOBS's case this is not for want of trying: three states (NSW, Victoria and Tasmania) have responded positively to AACOBS draft State Information Policies. However the Commonwealth government has failed to commit itself.

Judith Baskin, incoming Association President, stressed the role of the Association in working for a national information policy 'to ensure a coherent and consistent approach to the provision of information'. She called for the establishment of a consultative body to provide authoritative advice to government on national information policy.

Other issues

A formal seminar dinner was held at the Lakeside Hotel, at which Lindsay Curtis, First Assistant Secretary in the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department, raised a number of important legal issues relating to any national information policy: privacy, copyright, freedom of information.

On the second day of the seminar the Deputy Secretary of the Commonwealth Department of Communications spoke of the government's communications policy ('in a

very fluid state'); Barry Jones, MP, told us we needed a national information policy; and Senator David Hamer told us of the information we were already getting from the government.

Major papers came from Ashley Goldsworthy (President of the Australian Computer Society) and Peter Judge (CSIRO). Goldsworthy addressed issues of privacy, transborder data flows, and policy issues that an effective national information policy must consider. He feels 'There has been an almost total concern with economic issues to the complete exclusion of social issues', a balance which must be redressed.

Peter Judge discussed Australia's great dependence on overseas research and overseas data bases, in a paper closely related to his recent VALA keynote address. He called for consideration of planning, co-ordinating and development machinery in Australia for our information industry.

Panel session

Bill Welsh, Harrison Bryan and Ashley Goldsworthy joined together for the concluding session of the seminar. Bill Welsh suggested Australia hasten slowly in an area where so many statements are but 'pious hopes'.

In a motion from the floor, Allan Horton proposed 'that AACOBS convene a meeting of bodies interested in the development of a plan of action to arrive at principles for the creation of a national information policy'.

Much discussion ensued including the suggestion that we should be concentrating not on policies as such but on particular issues. Allan's motion was referred to AACOBS Standing Committee (due to meet the following day), and on this positive note the seminar ended.

Papers to be published

All of the major papers presented at the seminar will be published early in the new year (details will be announced in *Incite*). Proceedings were not tape recorded, so questions and the final panel session will not be able to be included.

Peter Clayton.

LAA and AGs meet yet again

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S Department convened a second meeting on 30 September to discuss further the operation of the new copyright procedures. The Library Association of Australia was represented by Allan Horton and Susan Acutt. Other bodies present included AACOBS, the Copyright Agency and Copyright Council. The aim of the meeting was to discuss matters of principle rather than interpretation and to report on results of the previous meeting.

Definition of 'Educational Institution'

Some uncertainty has arisen about whether libraries at teaching hospitals, which are being asked to make multiple copies available, are in fact eligible to make copies under S53B. It was thought that where those for whom the copies were made were students of a qualified institution, e.g. a university or CAE, copies could be made under S53B(1)(b) and S53B(2)(b). It was pointed out that some students could be those working for postgraduate qualifications of one of the professional colleges and not enrolled at an 'Educational Institution' as defined.

It was agreed that the Department would invite a submission from hospitals following which discussions could take place with the Copyright Council about possible widening of the definition.

The 'double' declaration under S50(7)

Some libraries have received legal advice that, on the wording of this clause, a declaration by the library is required even where neither S50(7)(a) or (b) apply.

The Copyright Council agrees that the clause can be read this way and that if this is the correct interpretation, it is quite an unnecessary requirement.

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LAA'S CONTINUING SAGA

THE LAA HAS HAD a rather long and tedious saga about its office accommodation. As you are aware, for a considerable length of time the Association leased office space in Clarence Street.

The rapidly increasing cost of this exercise led to the decision that we would purchase a property which would provide an excellent insurance against rising costs as well as being able to take advantage of the capital gains accruing in the Sydney property scene.

Members of Head Office who were engaged in the activity of searching for a property quickly came to learn that commercial properties were scarce and expensive.

In July 1978 Standing Committee gave permission to purchase a property. After a period of 24 months a contract was signed in our present property at Elizabeth Street and it was not until 10 months later that the LAA occupied its new premises.

When I took up the position of Executive Director on 20 July the staff had inhabited our office for three months and in that time it quickly became apparent that the accommodation was less than optimal. In fact, the office is so cramped that staff often have to work at home, and wait eagerly for me to be out of the office so that there is another desk

in a relatively quiet area.

The other major problem was the noise level from Elizabeth Street which was tested as being considerably above the acceptable level for office work. This has been rectified to a certain degree by the double glazing of the front windows.

As time progressed the working conditions became worse as other problems presented themselves - for example, lack of ventilation and the heat of the building. There were no fans or awnings: this has been rectified. The basement where our publications are stored has a problem of damp, and generally there is no space for stores. The kitchen is presently overcrowded with boxes of padded bags and a working table for the preparation of the *Copyright Kit*.

The members may well ask why these problems in a building that has been recently purchased. The main reason is a simple underestimation of the space required. Since the contract was signed we have increased our staff with the appointment of the CE Officer. No-one really anticipated the problems created by a small building on three levels: the amount of space we have would be more adequate if on the one level.

Following lengthy discussion and reports the Executive decided that the only alterna-

tive was for the Association to look for other accommodation. At the General Council meeting in November, Council resolved that 'the Executive be given authority to negotiate contracts on alternative accommodation'.

The basic criteria for selection of another building include:

- if possible, buy much more space than is presently required and lease that not used. This will allow room for expansion in the future;
- in the area purchased there must be adequate room for staff, a meeting room/library for Executive meetings, Publications Board meetings, etc.;
- an area where LAA publications can be displayed to prospective purchasers;
- an area where members can be interviewed by the staff and consult any records or publications of the LAA;
- other factors such as accessibility, location, value for money, etc.

The most heartening point at the moment is that Elizabeth Street was purchased for \$162,000 and will be on the market for \$240,000.

It is an excellent buy for an office of seven people, perfect location and many wonderful restaurants to choose from!

Susan Acutt
Executive Director