

PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

THE NATIONAL INFORMATION policy seminar arranged by the ACT Branch in early December was a most useful bringing together of people with different perspectives on the problem. The seminar is reported elsewhere in this issue. Here I would like to highlight the need for a policy and suggest some ways the Association might take further the impetus developed at the seminar, firstly though, congratulations to the ACT Branch for developing this initiative.

The Association's views are published in the information policy statement 'The need to know' (published in the 1981 Handbook, pp.59-60). It seems to me important that all members should be aware of the problem which dictates the need for a policy and should join in developing a national policy together with AACOBS and other interested groups. Librarians have a special concern because many of the issues have already made an impact on us and because we serve all parts of the community we must have a unique corporate view of the issues if we draw it all together.

May I suggest that divisions organise meetings early this year to discuss the issue involving other parts of the information community in the meetings. As an aid to discussion the papers are to be published as soon as possible but in the meantime the reports in the *Canberra Times* on Saturday, 5 December and 8, 9 and 10 December give some indication of what was discussed as does the summary in *Incite*.

Some people questioned the need for a policy. Some thought it was better to tackle each issue as it arose and others thought a plan of action would be more useful. It

seems to me that all are necessary, but without a policy it is difficult to adopt a consistent course of action and ensure that all aspects of the problem are appreciated and followed up. Some people thought that it would be difficult to develop a policy which has more than clichés.

One outcome of the seminar was a suggestion that a further conference be organised by AACOBS who have a draft policy which has been under discussion for some time. (This is AACOBS document S422). The Association has been invited to discuss the matter with AACOBS in February. It would be useful if divisions could have developed a wide ranging discussion prior to such a conference and also have furthered the work of interesting others in the information community (politicians, publishers, public servants and computer people for example) in the problems the information technology revolution is bringing to light. A few of the many issues are:

- the education of the community to cope with and appreciate the potential of the new technology;
- privacy of information about individuals;
- the development of standards to ensure compatibility of systems;
- who are to pay – for what?
- the need to ensure that the information poor don't get poorer.

Also let your General Councillors know if you think the statement 'The need to know' needs revising (their names and addresses are in this issue). Some of the things called for in that statement have or are about to happen.

The Association does tackle issues in this field as they arise. Currently Robert Boot is preparing a draft of an Association submission to the Telecom Inquiry on the Association's attitude. We need people interested in this area to contribute to the submission by examining the draft and suggesting possible additions. If you wish to help and can do so in January please contact me on (062) 621546

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published in *Incite* – Councillors commented on initiatives and responses in their Branch or divisions. Further news is elsewhere in this issue.

Legal data bases

The Queensland Branch and the Law Librarians Group had suggested that the LAA should make a submission to State Attorneys-General on the development of computerised legal information systems in Australia. The Executive discussed whether the LAA should prepare a submission and asked the Queensland Branch to go ahead. General Council endorsed this action and resolved that the Branch emphasise in any submission on this issue (a) the fundamental principles of citizens' access to information and freedom of information; (b) that access should be available to libraries, public institutions and citizens; (c) that Australian legislation and associated legal information – both Federal and State – must be given priority; (d) both Federal and State legal information must be available in all States; (e) that access is appropriate through public networks and not by means of dedicated terminals; (f) that present Federal Government policies on publication of government information are for cost recovery and not for profit.

Telecom Inquiry

The Federal Government has appointed a Committee of Inquiry into Telecommunications Services in Australia. Robert Boot from the National Library has been asked to prepare the submission.

Videotex

General Council endorsed the action taken by the LAA in relation to the Government's decision to exclude Telecom from introducing a videotex service to Australia for the time being. Since the meeting of Council there has been considerable coverage of the subject in the press. A full report will appear in *Incite* no2.

Formation of divisions

General Council endorsed the formation of the following divisions of the Association: Medical Librarians Section – NSW Group, SA Group, Vic Group, WA Group. Literacy Section – Vic Group. Special Libraries Section – Tas Group, NT Group.

Awards

General Council received the report of the Honorary Awards and conferred the HCL Anderson Award for 1981 on Phyllis Mander-Jones and the Redmond Barry Award for 1981 on James Allen Crawford.

Board of Education

A report of the Board meeting held on 29 and 30 October appeared in *Incite* No20. A number of items were referred to General Council for discussion and ratification. Council resolved that the revised statements on education for librarianship be adopted as draft statements of Association policy and be published in the 1982 *Handbook*.

Continuing Education

The Continuing Education Officer reported that the one day (copyright) workshops held in Sydney and Melbourne had not attracted large enrolments but had been considered useful by participants.

1982 Programs

Programs in library management and industrial relations are to be mounted nationally

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Report of GC Meeting

AT THE GENERAL COUNCIL meeting held on 27-28 November 1981, the LAA President welcomed Barrie Mitcheson, the incoming Vice President, President elect and Averill Edwards, the incoming General Secretary. Also welcomed were our recently elected General Councillors-at-large, John Levett and Linda Beveridge. This was the first meeting of Council in its newly constituted form. It was very pleasing to see many Section representatives attend as observers.

Copyright

A second meeting has been convened by the Attorney-General's Department to discuss the operation of the amended Copyright legislation. A full report of that meeting appears elsewhere in this issue.

The LAA's Audiovisual Services Committee prepared a submission on the Association's behalf for the Attorney-General's Department Inquiry into copyright in non-book materials. Submissions were to reach the Attorney-General's Department by the end of December.

Manpower project

The Committee conducting the project has experienced delays due to the late return of

some of the questionnaires. The final report should be completed early in the New Year.

Charging for inter-library loans

Following the last meeting of General Council the two papers setting out the cases for and against charging were sent to all divisions for comments. Comments were also invited from members through *Incite*. Of the responses the majority were not in favour of charging. Several divisions commented that a decision should not be made until the results of the Weinstock study of interlending are published.

The following motion was passed UNANIMOUSLY by General Council with little discussion:

'That the LAA endorses the principle that there should be no charge to other libraries for interlibrary loans.'

A motion was also passed to establish a Working Group of Council to monitor developments in interlending, including the Weinstock study. The Group will report briefly in *Incite* of their findings with a major report going to General Council.

Sales tax

Action to the date of the meeting had been