

LAA attends National Conference on Technology

From September 26-28 I represented the LAA at the National Conference on Technology, which was organised by the Minister for Science and Technology, Mr Barry Jones. It was attended by an invited membership of 140 representatives from industry, commerce, trade union movement, government departments and professional groups.

The three-day conference explored a number of issues including private R & D; the interaction between private and public research institutions; venture capital; government support for R & D; the job market and the impact of technology; education; the so-called 'sunrise' industries. No mean feat!

The objectives of the Conference were:

1. To consider the positive role of technology in economic development.
2. To explore ways and means of encouraging innovation, including increased research and development, in industry.
3. To examine means of removing inhibitions to and constraints on technological development.
4. To explore the need for and availability of selective assistance to encourage the development and/or revitalisation of industries based on new technological opportunities.
5. To seek ways and means of introducing new technologies that enhance social benefits while at the same time mitigating any disruptive social effects.
6. To explore ways and means of ensuring consultation between all interested and affected sectors of the community on technology related issues.
7. To identify education and training needs of the community in the new technological environment.
8. To examine the role of research in government and tertiary institutions and the mechanisms for increased interaction with industry.
9. To consider the roles of Federal and State Government as part of a national technology strategy.

Day 1 of the Conference, which began at 10 am and continued through dinner, consisted of an opening address by the Prime Minister, Mr R. Hawke and concluded with dinner address by Senator John Button. In between were 17 other speakers including Barry Jones whose interest and energy were apparent throughout the Conference through his excellent chairmanship.

Day 2 consisted again of presented papers until morning tea after which delegates broke into syndicate groups for the remainder of the day to consider designated topics. These were drawn together on Day 3 which included with presentations, panel sessions

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LAA buys new computer



The LAA's newest staff member, Sue Leonard at the keys of the word processor. Sue and Angela Brommann have been to a word processing course and Jo-anne Fuller has attended a computer course. Publications' staff will go to word processing courses early in 1984.

On Friday, 30 September the LAA office took delivery of a new computer. It is a fully integrated word processing and data processing Datapoint 8600 system with three 8200 terminals. The CPU also acts as a terminal. The system has 256K of memory and a 20 megabyte disk.

The decision to consider a new system was made as long ago as June 1981 when it was becoming abundantly clear that the Association required a word processor to facilitate the processing of an increasing volume of paperwork with the same number of staff. A Working Party of the Executive Committee, consisting of Barrie Mitcheson, Alan Bunsell and Susan Acutt was established to investigate the purchase of a word processor.

Almost simultaneously, voucher purchase and redemption increased, which placed an added burden on the present Qantel. It was also becoming clear that the Qantel was unable to provide much of the information required by the General Council, divisions and office staff, such as a printout of new members by Branch.

With the increase in the LAA's business in terms of investments, publications, vouchers and general accounting, the auditors began to express concern at the complexity of manual controls required. At this stage, the purchase of accounting and word

processing packages and additional memory were priced for the Qantel. The capacity for future upgrading in terms of cost, response time and age of the technology was not good.

Preliminary investigations took place into purchasing a stand-alone word processing system, which could communicate with the Qantel. In view of the limitations of the Qantel, it was decided that this would be a short-term measure only, and not in the best interests of the Association.

The search began for a fully integrated word and data processing system for the LAA's membership and vouchers (on present machine), and adding a committee system, full accounting system, stock control and word processing. The system also needed the capacity to automate files such as the *Special Libraries Directory*, salary survey, etc. and the facility to retrieve information from the membership file and merge this with form letters on the word processing system.

In February 1983 a tender document was distributed to a number of companies which had expressed interest in providing a system, and which, upon preliminary investigations, appeared to be able to meet the LAA requirements. The tender date closed in early March. The Working Party then proceeded to a lengthy evaluation of the systems which met our cost and system requirements.

Several demonstrations were held of the systems appearing on the short list. In June a full report was presented to the Executive Committee with a recommendation to purchase a Datapoint system going to the July

meeting of General Council.

Negotiations were completed with Datapoint in August and a system ordered. Packages have been bought for word processing and accounts and these are already operational. Specifications are being prepared for membership, vouchers, committees and stock control. It is intended that the system will be fully operational by 1 January 1984. For some time, however, two systems will be operating to ensure that members are not adversely affected by the changeover.

The total cost is approximately \$80,000, which has been financed by a bank loan and some of the LAA's existing capital. This proved considerably less expensive than leasing the machine. The LAA also does not gain from the tax advantage afforded companies through leasing.

So what will this new machine do? Over the last couple of years the LAA has grown in terms of complexity, volume of work and activities. This has meant that it has become very difficult to incorporate new services without an increase in staff.

Publication sales and handling continue to increase, as do vouchers. The faster response time of the machine will speed up these activities, and accommodate the increases. Word processing will save considerable time with correspondence and reports, and allow the growing volume to be incorporated. One of the major advantages is the

facility to search and retrieve on a wide variety of fields, which will allow a range of information to be accessed from the membership file. There should be no limitation to this. Files can be created and manipulated, such as the salary survey, *Special Libraries Directory* and CE survey.

In due course much of the copy for publications will be typed in-house and transferred to the typesetter via acoustic coupler. This will lead to a significant saving in typesetting costs.

In summary:

Qantel

- (1) *Membership*
 - basically a mailing system, labels
 - some lists
 - receipting of fees
 - mailing list for serial publications
 - record length limited.
- (2) *Vouchers*
 - all accounting must be done manually.
- (3) *Committees*
 - basic mailing lists.

Datapoint

- (1) *Membership*
 - as for Qantel plus much expanded membership record to incorporate more information
 - retrieval of information, e.g. new members in NSW in public libraries since June
 - librarians under 30 with ALAA only, etc.
 - automatic generation of membership cards
 - fees will be receipted and automatically posted to accounts package
 - information from membership can be merged with information in word processing.
 - (2) *Vouchers*
 - enhanced system with all financial aspects integrated.
 - (3) *Committees*
 - a detailed system to enable updates of all committees and alert to those requiring elections
 - mailing system
 - allow this information to be transferred to typesetters.
 - (4) *Accounting*
 - creditors
 - debtors
 - general ledger. All fully integrated with membership, vouchers, word processing.
 - (5) *Publications*
 - stock control system integrated with other systems.
 - (6) *Publishing*
 - text for *InCite*, *Handbook* and brochures etc. will be put on system - allows easy update and transfer to typesetter.
 - (7) *Salary files*
 - salary survey - is the first to be mounted. This will allow the Industrial Information Officer to compare a lot of the information and update easily.
- If you would like further information please do not hesitate to contact the LAA office.

Susan Acutt
Executive Director



News from the President

In the time since I last contributed to *InCite* much has been happening within the Association at all levels.

Some notable events I would like to comment on.

IFLA Conference, Munich, August

Following the decision of General Council to host the 1988 IFLA Conference I represented the LAA at the 49th IFLA Conference held in Munich from August 21 to 27.

As my first IFLA Conference I was interested in many things: the formal part of the conference as we would know it, is only one aspect. Much activity takes place outside this with the meeting of Round Tables and committees. This occurs during the week before as well as during the conference itself. Such activities are an important and integral part of the work of IFLA.

I was also specifically interested in the organization and operation of the IFLA Conference given our 1988 involvement. Therefore spent considerable time 'behind the scenes', talking to people to get as much information as possible. This included time spent with delegates from Kenya, Japan, USA and Great Britain who have responsibility for organising IFLA conferences in the years before 1988.

Being an international conference conducted in four languages with translation services (including conference papers) and delegates from many countries (including 25 from Australia) the organization of such a conference is a complicated but not impossible task, especially with a four-year lead time and by spreading the work around branches.

Munich is a beautiful city in which to conduct a conference and many of the social and cultural activities are different from LAA conferences. Still we are not German! and like Kenya, Japan, USA and Great Britain, will host a different sort of conference. There was certainly an expression of interest in Sydney in 1988 by many IFLA delegates.

Executive Director

Members will by now be aware that Susan Acutt has resigned from the position of Executive Director to take up the position of Director, Management Services at the State Library of Victoria.

During her period at the LAA, Susan has made a significant contribution to the LAA and its continuing development. In so doing she has, with the support and co-operation of her staff and the membership, built up the work of her predecessors.

On behalf of the membership I wish her every success for her future career, and thank her for the contribution she has made to the LAA.

B. Mitcheson
President

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Australian Library Journal

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