



ALIC is alive and well and making progress . . .

The Australian Libraries and Information Council (ALIC) was set up by the Commonwealth Government in consultation with the separate State Governments and the Northern Territory Administration, following the acceptance by the Commonwealth Government of the Report of the Interdepartmental Working Group set up to consider the Government's policy on assistance to public libraries.

That report was tabled in the Commonwealth Parliament in September 1981 by the then Minister for Home Affairs and Environment, the Hon. I. Wilson. The report recommended, *inter alia* that:

The Commonwealth should play a role in nationwide co-operation and co-ordination of library services. This should be achieved through:

(i) the establishment of an Australian Libraries and Information Council, as proposed by the State Librarians' Council and the National Library of Australia, to be responsible for providing advice to Governments at all levels on the development of library and related information services in Australia, with particular regard to

a) the formulation and progressive development of a national plan for the development of library and related information services at the national, state and local government levels; and

b) the establishment and operation of mechanisms to facilitate resource sharing in the field of libraries and related information services . . .

As the recommendation noted, the initiative in the establishment of ALIC came from the State Librarians Council. A submission by the SLC to the first meeting of the Conference of Commonwealth and State Ministers having responsibility for Culture and the Arts, held in Perth in 1979, was referred to the National Library for comment and, at the second meeting of the Conference, in Canberra in 1981, a joint submission by the SLC and the NLA was endorsed by all Ministers.

Following that and with the additional support given by the report of the IDWG, the Prime Minister formally approached the Premiers seeking their co-operation in setting up the Council. The ensuing negotiations were quite protracted and this, coupled with a series of postponements of the third meeting of the Conference (which, indeed, is still to be



Mr Harrison Bryan, Chairman of ALIC

held), delayed the inaugural meeting of ALIC until 3 August 1982.

ALIC met for the second time on 29 October 1982 and a third meeting is scheduled for 24 February 1983.

ALIC is made up of the Director-General of the National Library of Australia, the State Librarians, the Director of the Northern Territory Library Service, one member nominated by the Commonwealth Minister for Science and Technology and three members nominated by the Commonwealth Minister for Education.

The present Ministerial nominee members are: Mr P. Judge (Director Central Information Library and Editorial Services, CSIRO) nominated by the Minister for Science and Technology and Ms M. Miland (Commissioner, Commonwealth Schools Commission), Mrs M. Trask (Head, School of Library and Information Studies, Kuring-gai College of Advanced Education) and Mr N. Stockdale (Librarian, Flinders University) all nominated by the Minister for Education. Mr Stockdale replaces Mr L. F. Hennessy (First Assistant Commissioner, Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission) who resigned after ALIC's first meeting.

At the first meeting the Council elected Mr Bryan as Chairman and Mrs Trask as Deputy Chairman. The National Library provides the administrative support for ALIC, at the request of the Commonwealth Department of Home Affairs and Environment, which had been identified by the Ministerial Conference to undertake this responsibility. The Secretary to ALIC is Mr E. V. Vellacott, (Principal Librarian, Secretariat, National Library of Australia).

Understandably ALIC's first meeting was

devoted to the detailed consideration of its role and functioning. A notional timetable was drawn up for the preparation of its advice to Governments and it was decided to seek information from a number of bodies and institutions on the present state of library and related information services in Australia.

The second meeting considered the submissions received, some unsolicited, on a variety of topics. However, the major item of business was a draft working paper on issues and objectives drawn up by two members of the Council.

At its forthcoming meeting ALIC will have before it a second draft of the working paper, which the Council intends to distribute widely, encouraging comment and criticism to assist in meeting its terms of reference.

While the actual achievements of ALIC to date may seem somewhat unimpressive it is early days yet. Moreover, to those with long memories it may seem an interminable time since ALIC was first mooted. Nevertheless, in the short time that it has actually been in



Mrs Margaret Trask, ALIC's Deputy Chairman

existence, it seems to this reporter to have made remarkable progress in grappling with concepts which are by no means simple or non-contentious and in reaching agreement on the strategy to be adopted.

ALIC looks forward to wide and open discussion of its perceptions which will no doubt illuminate its ultimate task of framing positive advice to Governments. The full membership of ALIC is: Mr W. L. Brown, Mr H. Bryan (Chairman), Mr R. Davis, Mr R. F. Doust, Mr W. Horton, Mr P. Judge, Ms M. Miland, Mr E. Miller, Mr S. L. Ryan, Mr. R. C. Sharman, Mr N. Stockdale, Mrs M. Trask (Deputy Chairman).

Harrison Bryan
Chairman

Australian Libraries and Information
Council

Your 1983 membership fees are now due!