

LIBRARY ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA
MEDICAL LIBRARIES SECTION

6th BIENNIAL
AUSTRALIAN MEDICAL
LIBRARIANS' CONFERENCE

Regent Hotel, Melbourne
August 25-29, 1985

MEDICAL LIBRARIES
— NEW DIRECTIONS

CALL FOR PAPERS

The Conference Planning Committee would like to hear from persons interested in presenting papers at the Biennial Conference.

Some of the topics to be covered in the Conference are:

History of health science libraries in Australia

Management in the health libraries of the 90s

Peer review and continuing education

Library systems under change

Medical library design and planning

Electronic age for booksellers and publishers

Medlars III — the friendly system.

If you wish to present a paper please send a 200 word summary, including the title and an estimate of desired reading time, to the Conference Committee by 28th February, 1985.

LAA Medical Libraries Section
Conference Planning Committee
P.O. Box 103
South Yarra, Victoria
Australia, 3141.

The Handbook

I was both surprised and worried to read in the Report of General Council (*InCite*, 5 Oct. p.8) that the *LAA Handbook* may be dropped.

Please Council think again! That *Handbook* is the essential record of the LAA, recording its officers, its professional beliefs, its publications, constitution, and its membership. It is the reference work on the LAA. Folders containing the latest Statement on the latest idea will not serve the purpose. Their format alone will make them ephemeral. They will just be cataloguing problems and reference librarians' nightmares.

If it is hard to keep the *Handbook* up-to-date try a bit harder. If it is expensive to produce consider cutting down on standing copy by referring to earlier issues. But please do not diminish the standard of publication. At least the present *Handbook*, despite its passion for bold type, looks like the product of an Association which cares about the design of printed books.

I for one use it almost every week, and I don't relish the thought of hunting through serials, leaflets and other fugitive publications every time I want to find out what the LAA has said about a professional matter.

Surely the cost of the *Handbook* is an inescapable charge on Association funds. Not everything we do can be measured by 'the market' or decided in terms of cost recovery. One of my tests of a healthy professional association is whether it maintains up-to-date, useful and consistent handbooks and journals. At present the *LAA Handbook*, the *Australian Library Journal* and *InCite* are giving the Association a high profile among professional associations. Let us not tamper with it.

Professor Jean P. Whyte

Chairman

Graduate School of Librarianship

Report of the Working Party on Document Delivery

Have the National and State libraries lost the will to live?

The NLA will collect 'fringe material', to which no one else wants a subscription (JUNK?) and perhaps could be the national repository for 'lesser-used journal backsets' (OLD JUNK?). Not a happy prospect for the NLA collections and certainly not one that would attract 'the overwhelming majority of librarians' as the Report asserts.

Collections, particularly state and national, must serve the totality of their user communities. For any library entrusted with public responsibility, to serve sectional interests, whether university libraries, medical libraries or any other elite that might develop, is a gross failure and an injustice to their users. We rely on the National and State libraries to prevent such distortion of resources.

However, the real problem is service to users, the only meaningful yardstick. Action has been required in the ILL/document delivery field for many years. Unfortunately that suggested in this, the most recent report, is quite inappropriate. With no prospect of substantially increased funding, the outcome can only be a transfer of funds, as well as responsibility, from the State and National libraries to designated (ie. major university) libraries.

While not denying our current reliance on the universities, I believe such a transfer of funding and the institutionalisation of this defacto arrangement is contrary to public interest and will strictly limit future options.

I am sure librarians at the ILL workplace would support the belief that the BLID is still the best/only model for Australia. The figures on collection size, provided in the Report, indicate the NLA already has the collection. It certainly has the responsibility and with a staff of well over 500 should be made to perform.

The time is ripe for the State and National libraries to shoulder their responsibilities. Should this require a move to an extrovert 'service function' ideal, so much the better. Thus an ILL debacle to match that of music and sound recordings may be avoided.

Russell Nicholson

Librarian

Hunter District Water Board

PRE-PUBLICATION OFFER!

Proceedings of the Second National Interlending Conference (1983) of the Library Association of Australia.

Orders received by November 30 will be processed at the special price of \$16 to LAA members, \$22 to non-members. Add \$1.20 for postage. Send orders to LAA, 376 Jones St., Ultimo NSW 2007.

News from the Centre for Library Systems

THE CENTRE for Library Systems is a research and consultancy centre established under the auspices of the School of Library and Information Studies, Kuring-gai CAE in 1978. The Centre, under the Directorship of Dagmar Schmidmaier has been involved in research, consultancy, continuing education and publication projects. Activities over the last few years include the KWOC project for school and special libraries, continuing education courses on computers and libraries, and on aspects of cataloging and networking. Publications include *School Libraries and Technology*, a sourcebook by Marianne Broadbent and Dagmar Schmidmaier, *KWOC Indexing in Secondary School Libraries* by Lois Jennings and Dagmar Schmidmaier, and *Automating Circulation Control in the School Library*. Available shortly will be the papers of a one day seminar held as part of the Graduate Diploma in Teacher Librarianship programme in 1983, entitled *School Libraries and Computers. Dream or Reality*.

The Centre has also been responsible for the development and marketing of the MARC-MAINT computer software, an online MARC based suite of programmes suitable for teaching principles of online cataloging. To date the system has been sold to two educational institutions in Victoria, as well as being extensively used in the teaching programmes at Kuring-gai college of Advanced Education.

Another project undertaken by the Centre is the computer processing and analysis of user surveys for the Planning Process. The Planning Process is a system which may be used to assist in public library planning and further information about its application may be obtained from the Public Libraries Division of the State Library of NSW.

Academic staff from the Department of Information Studies who have been involved in the Centre's activities include Crystal Condous, Allen Hall, Lois Jennings, John Kerrisk and Dagmar Schmidmaier. During the last six months three of these staff members have re-

signed from Kuring-gai CAE and taken up other positions. Crystal Condous is now Manager, Fairfax Library, Lois Jennings has been appointed Head of the Library at the newly formed MacArthur Institute of Technology, and Dagmar Schmidmaier has been appointed Head, Division of Library Services, NSW TAFE.

John Kerrisk, lecturer in the Department of Information Studies, Kuring-gai College of Advanced Education, will take over as Director of the Centre for Library Systems and Allen Hall will be responsible for two of the Centre's projects, the sale and installation of MARCMAINT, and the User Surveys for the Planning Process.

Enquiries about the Centre's activities should be directed to John Kerrisk, Department of Information Studies, Kuring-gai College of Advanced Education.