

LAA PAPER ON LOBBYING

At its meeting in August, 1984, General Council approved the circulation of the following paper on lobbying which was prepared by the LAA President.

LOBBYING

Purpose:

1. Lobbying of governments, industry and other interest groups is a desirable purpose under the Royal Charter. The objects of the Association include:
 - (i) to promote, establish and improve libraries and library services;
 - (ii) to improve the standard of librarianship and the status of the library profession.
2. Effective lobbying is particularly necessary because of the emerging pattern both federally and in some states of regular meetings between the Association and Ministers with portfolios embracing library and information matters.
3. Effective lobbying is also desirable because in a period of tight economic resources it is essential that the Association's priorities be effectively advanced and understood by government.

Rationale:

An effective lobbying program should:

1. So far as possible, and without prejudice to differing interests in states and interest areas, set priorities for support to libraries which the Association hopes to achieve.
2. Ensure co-ordination so far as practicable in the approaches made to government, industry and interest groups.
3. Ensure an effective program which avoids duplication of effort.
4. Ensure a program which avoids conflicting advice to government and decision makers on the Association's priorities.

This can only be achieved by referring all proposals for lobbying activities to the Executive Director for consideration before a campaign is initiated.

Practice:

It is not practicable for the Association to establish a strict code of lobbying practices. This is not only because Australia has eight sepa-

rate governments, but also because priorities will vary across the nation and new developments may impose sudden new priorities. However, it is to the advantage of the Association to as far as possible have a broad understanding each year of lobbying priorities. This could be achieved by:

1. Requesting each Branch Council in the first two months of the year to suggest targets for federal lobbying activities, and a program in their own states.
2. The President and Executive Director to, as appropriate, consult with the President of the Australian Library Promotion Council, the Chairman of the AACOBS Standing Committee, the Chairman of ALIC, the Director-General of the National Library of Australia and other appropriate parties about their perception of lobbying priorities.
3. The Executive Director to then develop a program which will go to the first General Council meeting each year and embrace:
 - (i) suggested federal priorities for lobbying for the year;
 - (ii) identify supporting material which has been prepared or on which work needs to be done;
 - (iii) identify as practicable some priorities within these activities for Council's consideration;
 - (iv) outline proposed state/regional lobbying priorities as identified by the Branch Councils, and suggest any areas of common concern to which the Council might pay particular attention.
4. Whilst it is not practicable to lay down a detailed program for how this lobbying is to be done, it is essential that the President and Executive Director ensure that Branch Presidents at least are well aware of approaches to government, etc. The appropriate mechanisms depend in part of course on particular access that the Association's officers have to government, but should include:
 - (i) continuation of the present semi-formal procedure of regular consultations between appropriate federal Ministers and the President of the Library Association of Australia;
 - (ii) further development where possible of the present practice in some states (e.g. Victoria and New South Wales) of regular meetings with the Minister

- having carriage of library matters;
- (iii) further development of the present somewhat ad hoc arrangements for preparing submissions to appropriate government enquiries, etc.

The Association is very effective but has usually been reactive in this area, and it may well be that for a few limited subjects each year it would gain by preparing detailed submissions ahead of actual enquiries.

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CORRECTION

Page 6 of *InCite* No 17 carried an item about a possible visit by British information consultant Elizabeth Orna; this was abbreviated from a letter sent by Ms Orna.

It included the statement that Telecom had purchased the thesaurus and indexing system designed by Ms Orna, but we have been advised by Telecom that this is not the case. They are willing to discuss their reasons with any interested parties.

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