OBITUARY

Brenda Freeman

Brenda Freeman was in the middle of her final year of study when she was taken ill. She had entered the Department as a mature student and set herself high standards for her academic work, achieving grades of 8 or 9 for library studies, and was best student of the year in the School in which she took her minor study.

Brenda quickly became involved in student affairs and I have vivid memories of her fundraising activities selling instant lottery tickets at an Open Day. No one could refuse her! She worked ceaselessly to improve the quality of life for students. Her mature approach enabled her to make a unique contribution to academic and professional committees. During the last summer vacation she led a group of students in a study tour of the Eastern States, and professional colleagues in Melbourne, Canberra and Sydney may recall the happy, curly-haired per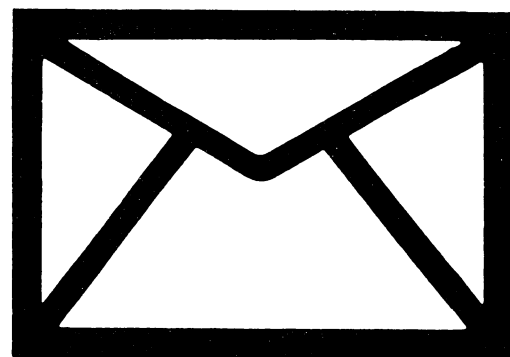son who visited their libraries in November 1984. On her return, she threw herself into working for the Department and helping to re-organise the laboratories as a part-time technician. The organisers of the Melbourne Multi-Cultural Conference offered a place to a WAIT student. Brenda represented DLIS and gave a sparkling paper on her return to Perth, at a time when she was undergoing diagnostic tests.

Mercifully she was ill only for a short time. She set an example to everyone for being a quiet achiever, for outside her life at WAIT and the professional community, she cared for her husband, mother and three daughters. Our sympathies are with them.

Patricia Layzell Ward
Department of Library &
Information Studies WAIT

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Document Delivery

In the development of a national document centre, happily being floated once more, it is essential that the efficiency of the entire system be the prime consideration and not simply the efficiency of the centre. Although they are closely aligned, it is a necessary distinction to make.

It will be unfortunate if the AACOBS ILL Code continues to require verification. While such a precept may possibly be required by our current non-system, which relies on the better nature of colleagues, such a hangover from a more leisurely ILL age should be dispensed with by a document provision centre. As an initial step in a document request, obligatory verification is a major inefficiency, being a prime example of solutioneering.

The time to verify a request is when it fails. The universal availability of on-line bibliographic services allows the transfer of responsibility for verification to the requesting library/individual, who is obviously best situated to decide the level of effort/cost justified in verification. Verification is not a function of a document provision centre; either the item is available as quoted or it is not!

This arrangement represents simplified procedures at both ends with a consequent improvement in speed of supply.

The proposal of a 'fast track' service I find surprising. Offering a formalised fast track service must be detrimental to overall efficiency. More importantly, however, to start out with the thought that the document service will be inadequate in such a large number of cases as to require a 'better' service is counter-productive. Logically, the aim of the centre should be to reduce these cases to such a low level that the few that remain can continue to be handled through personal contact.

The time to consider the need for a separate 'fast track' service is when it is known what is possible with a properly organised document centre. To do otherwise is to be beaten before starting. Another important realisation is that turnaround time is a function of processing complexity and is not related to level of business except in the case of system collapse. The actions involved in processing a request should be the absolute minimum. With this in mind, a two-day in-house turnaround is a very low target to set.

To summarise: let there be no requirement to verify; let there be no formalised 'fast track' service; and let's do better than a two-day turnaround!

Russell Nicholson
Librarian
Hunter District Water Board