

# AUSTRALIAN FEDERAL LIBRARIES COMMITTEE

## REPORT ON PROGRESS by Jenny Gleeson, AFLC Secretariat

On 16 November 1984, the then Department of Home Affairs and Environment hosted a seminar to consider the formation of an Australian Federal Libraries Committee. The meeting was supported by the Chairman of the Public Service Board, and delegates included librarians of federal departments and authorities as well as representatives of management and users.

Speakers at the seminar included Pat Galvin, Secretary of the Department, who opened the proceedings; Warren Horton, the then LAA President, who spoke in support of the proposal, and Harrison Bryan, Director-General of the National Library, who welcomed delegates to the National Library and expressed the Library's support for the concept. The impressive turnout of Commonwealth librarians, management representatives and users augured well for a successful meeting.

The second session was a panel discussion involving working librarians. Each explained the kinds of everyday problems they faced, and how they managed to solve them without the help of an AFLC. Each gave examples of the kinds of assistance they believed an AFLC could offer, and pleaded the case for more assistance. A lively question and answer session followed.

The third session involved Peter Dawe (CSIRO, Melbourne) discussing the benefits gained by CSIRO's co-ordinated system, and Norm Fisher, the Director of the Bureau of Labour Market Research, who spoke of the value of using outside expertise in formulating policy, and in refining established systems. He suggested professional bodies had a major responsibility to contribute to the improvement of government without necessarily getting funding or resources from government.

Jenny Gleeson then put forward three possible alternatives for the meeting to consider.

*Option 1:* A working group or Inter-Departmental Committee, to look at the possibility of doing something else;

*Option 2:* Hiring, commissioning or seconding a consultant to canvass fully the needs of all government libraries and to prepare a priorities paper to spell out exactly what needs to be done;

*Option 3:* Setting up a secretariat to commence as early as possible to carry out the tasks outlined above.

The ACT Task Force had already rejected

option 1 and 2 as involving unnecessary further delay and being expensive. At the beginning of the seminar, the Secretary of D.H.A. & E. had offered a secretariat of one person; the meeting accepted this offer and the following motion was passed:

This meeting of Federal librarians, users and managers:

1. *Considers* that there is scope for improving the efficiency and quality of services provided by libraries and their staff within Federal Departments and agencies, consistent with the objectives and priorities of these organisations, by professional co-operation between these libraries;
2. *Considers* that the existing level of co-operation of a bilateral nature, and through the professional LAA, is useful but inadequate;
3. *Agrees* to the formation of an Australian Federal Libraries Committee to achieve a more substantial level of co-operation;
4. *Accepts* the offer from the Secretary, Department of Home Affairs and Environment, to provide secretariat assistance in the formation of this Committee;
5. *Agrees* that an interim Committee formed from the organisers of this seminar, and with the power to co-opt, be established to co-operate with the Department of Home Affairs and Environment to develop:

(1) Appropriate terms of reference for the Committee

(2) Appropriate composition (including numbers, interests and method of selection/election)

(3) Initial work program for 1985 in accordance with views expressed at this meeting.

6. *Requests* that this task force report back to a second meeting of Australian Federal library staff and users to be convened at the end of March 1985.

Copies of the transcript of the seminar are available. People interested in receiving the transcript can contact Jenny Gleeson, care of the Department, at GPO Box 1252, Canberra, ACT, 2601 — Phone (062) 46 7663.

The Secretariat now consists of two people. Jenny Gleeson, formerly librarian of the Department of Aboriginal Affairs, has been involved in the move towards an AFLC since 1977. She is a permanent officer within the Department of Arts, Heritage and Environ-

ment (formerly Home Affairs and Environment). Margaret Thomson, formerly senior librarian working on special projects in Department of Defence, joined the Secretariat on 6 February.

An AFLC Task Force has been set up comprised of the following:

*Jenny Gleeson* (Arts, Heritage & Environment) — Convenor.

\**Jean Dartnall* (Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority) — representing small remote and statutory authority libraries.

*Warren Bebbington* (Canberra School of Music) — representing users. *Janet Smith* (Arts, Heritage and Environment) — representing Canberra-based, medium size libraries. *Bev Orr* (Australian Audit Office) — representing Canberra-based small libraries. *B McDonald* (Public Service Board) — representing management.

\**Rosemary Bell* (Foreign Affairs) — former convenor of LAA ACT Branch AFLC Committee.

*Margaret Thomson* (Arts Heritage and Environment/Defence) — representing large libraries.

\**Averill Edwards* (NLA) — representing LAA.

(\*Corresponding members)

As soon as the AFLC Task Force has endorsed the AFLC papers comments will be sought from all potential AFLC member organisations. The AFLC papers comprise terms of reference, membership of AFLC and 1985 Work Programme. Librarians will be kept informed through *InCite*.

### INTER-LIBRARY LOAN OF AUDIOVISUAL MATERIALS

The Audiovisual Services Committee of the LAA is currently reviewing Part B of the Australian Inter-Library Loan Code to assess its continuing relevance to the needs of libraries.

The Committee seeks comments from all interested persons on the operation of Part B and proposals designed to improve inter-library lending of audiovisual materials.

All comments should be sent to —  
Mr PT McNally  
Convenor  
Audiovisual Services Committee  
Library Association of Australia  
376 Jones Street  
Ultimo, NSW 2007

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