



# Library an election issue!

es, really. But not here. Not yet anyway . . . It must be every Australian librarian's dream that the provision of a good library service would be regarded by governments, local or otherwise, as being so vital to the community that elections could be won and lost over such an issue.

Yet in a place not too far distant, an improved library service has become an election issue. The City Council of Invercargill, New Zealand, has decided on the advice of its finance committee, following a loan poll, not to proceed with a new library during its remaining time in office.

The next election is scheduled for October, but in the meantime a further study of library options is to be undertaken.

Originally the Council had planned to raise a \$8.28 million loan for a library-shopping



complex, but this was rejected by the ratepayers. The Chairman of the Committee working on the project said that it meant that the library would now become an election issue. He realised that it would mean delays and increased costs if the project eventually proceeded, but saw that as inevitable, pointing out that democracy was not 'a fast-track method of making decisions'.

The Mayor, Mrs Eve Pool, said that she was happy to fight an election on the issue of a desperately-needed new library.

Some councillors favoured selling the inner city site for the proposed library and investigating alternative sites. They pointed out that it had not originally been purchased with a library in mind.

While the loan poll had indicated that the response of ratepayers to the proposed project was less enthusiastic than that of the Council, one councillor said that she did not feel that this meant that the public was against the idea of a library, but that they did not wish their Council to be involved in a commercial project. A plan has been put forward whereby the library as planned could be funded by the Council, but the shopping area would be sold on a strata title basis.

*InCite* will try to get further details as the election fight progresses. It will be interesting to see how the library fares at the end of the fight.

## TAX BENEFITS FOR LAA MEMBERS

The LAA had the following article commissioned to assist members in preparing their tax returns in relation to their LAA membership. If you have any queries about what is tax deductible you could check with the Australian Taxation Office or a taxation consultant.

The most important issue to remember is that your membership subscription is claimable but don't be tempted to claim it if you are not a member. The Taxation Office does make checks from time to time!

Jenny Adams  
Executive Director

### THE TAX CHANGES

In the last year there have been major changes to the income tax legislation. The old business lunch is no longer tax deductible — but the changes don't stop there. From 1 July 1986, if employees don't take great care in recording employment related expenses, valuable deductions may be lost.

For members of the Association who are employees to maximise their claims for membership fees, the cost of publications and books and the cost of their attendance at any conferences run by the Association or other professional bodies, here are a few key points to remember:

From 1 July 1986, most employment related expenses will be tax deductible only if you retain a receipt or similar document with the following details:

- (a) the date of the expense
- (b) the name of the person who supplied the goods or service
- (c) the amount

- (d) the nature of the expense
- (e) the date of the receipt

This means that in order to claim a deduction for your annual membership subscription to professional organisations such as the Association you will need to obtain and retain receipts in the appropriate form. The same applies to the cost of professional magazines, periodicals, conferences and seminars.

- 2. Unlike periodicals, the cost of books is not immediately tax deductible, but you are entitled to claim depreciation at the rate of 20% per year.

If you purchase books after 1 July 1986 to start or add to a professional library, however, under the new rules you should keep receipts detailing:

- (a) date of purchase
- (b) name of person from whom you bought the book
- (c) the cost

- 3. From 19 September 1985 the cost of conferences and seminars which you attend may not be fully tax deductible, even where appropriate receipts are obtained. This is because from that date money spent on the provision of entertainment is no longer tax deductible. The provision of entertainment refers to the provision of entertainment by way of food, drink or recreation, and also includes related travel or accommodation. There are a limited number of exceptions to the general rule.

One such exception permits a deduction to be claimed for the full amount paid to attend a seminar, meeting, conference or lecture where meals etc. are served providing the seminar:

- (a) lasts for at least four hours (excluding meals and breaks)
- (b) is not primarily to provide entertainment. These seminars are called 'eligible seminars'. If a seminar isn't four hours long then try and ensure your receipt itemises separately the cost of any food and drink provided to

you at the seminar. This amount is not deductible. If the cost cannot be identified, you can make an estimate.

The cost of recreation in connection with any seminars is not deductible, eg a trip to a local tourist attraction. This is so regardless of whether or not it is an eligible seminar.

There are other rules which apply to 'in-house' employer-sponsored seminars.

- 4. Before 19 September 1985 the cost of travelling to and from business seminars and any accommodation costs were generally tax deductible. From 19 September 1985 travel and accommodation which is reasonably incidental to attendance at an eligible seminar will continue to be deductible. However, an appropriate proportion of travel and accommodation costs associated with attending other seminars where food, drink or recreation is provided will not in all instances be deductible.

The documents required to support a claim for travel expenses after 1 July 1986 will depend upon the nature of the expense, eg car expenses, airfares etc. and whether the travel is in or out of Australia. Ask your professional adviser for details.

Where your total expenses (other than those relating to a meal allowance or travel allowance when away on business) do not exceed \$300 for the year you need not keep the new highly detailed records required. However, you should keep receipts and information sufficient to accurately detail the expenditure incurred.

All receipts and documents must be kept for three and a half years after lodging returns, or until any dispute on the assessment is finalised.

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**A one class airline or a professional association? Or both? Or is it the same thing? See Letters p. 7, 8, 9.**