



**It's membership that matters**

Several letters in *InCite* 4 July have taken our President to task about his mental leap on the place of Technician members in the Association expressed in his statement on p2 *InCite* 6 June.

For the future of the Association he should stand unrepentant about the thrust, if not the letter, of what he was saying. The priority for our Association in the years ahead is to develop that comprehensive membership and strong financial base without which our chances of making any real impact on the direction of Australian society and serving the overall interests of members are minimal.

Technician employment is a growth area in library and information services. My discussions with technicians in South Australia lead me to conclude that:

1. Technicians would like to participate in the Association, particularly if such membership provided letters after their names.
2. Technicians will remain substantially

**The professional question**

While I agree with the comments made by Professor Whyte (*InCite* 4 July) on the amateurish and simplistic notion our president seems to hold on the question of professionalism, it would have been more appropriate and certainly more realistic had the nurses-nursing aide analogy been used.

*Hanns Possin,*  
Nepean CAE

alienated from the Association by any insistence of librarian members that they reserve to themselves the designation 'professional'.

The debate about the definition of 'professional' will never be resolved — the sooner it is recognised and we eliminate or at least minimise its use the better.

Let's forget about a 'professional' membership category — it will not affect our standing as a 'professional' Association in the eyes of the world. Let's have Librarian Members and Technician Members, both eligible for letters after their names. There is no other way out of the imbroglio, a way which reconciles the needs of those who would join the flight and those already on board. All passengers are needed if we are to substantiate our claim for national representation and leadership in library and information services.

*Alan Bunn*  
President (S.

**Congratulations!**

I must confess that I had some reservations about the LAA Biennial Conference being held at Darwin. I suppose one of the main reasons was the DISTANCE — to organise and to travel and high EXPENSES.

As it turned out, only half the usual number of librarians and others attended. Perhaps because it was attended by less numbers, the activities for the whole week ran smoothly.

As a person who has attended a few LAA conferences during the last 10 years, I thought the organisation of the 1986 biennial LAA Conference at Darwin was one of the best. The opening ceremony was unusual; perhaps only Darwin weather can permit such outdoor activities, feeding 900 people with BBQ on the spot is no easy task for anyone, but everyone got things to eat and drink and enjoyed the performance by Aborigines.

In spite of the strange exterior of the Darwin Performing Arts centre, I rather became attached to that place in the end. Having no experience to listen to a music concert during the week, in the evening in the same room gave me a better idea what the atmosphere can be like when it is used for performing art.

One cannot attend all sessions beside keynote speakers; and I found if I chose good elective sessions, I felt the Conference was good. If I chose wrong ones (for myself, not others), then I felt I did not get so much out of the Conferences. This year I must have chosen the right ones, mostly anyhow.

I thought most of the Keynote Speaker ranged from good to excellent. A few could have had a bit more life in their presentation. Starting the Conference with Dr Chen's very audio-visual and lively presentation, and finishing the week with Mr Warren Horton's very serious and demanding session, was an excellent order. The closing session was again very Darwinian and unusual in a very enjoyable way.

This is the first time that Brighton City Council sent a councillor to a LAA Conference. I actually enjoyed the experience of introducing him to our profession at large. I was most impressed with the librarians' power of organising the Conference so well for such a large number of attendants. I told him we are experts in organising information for people, and at retrieving them (informatic and people) when they are needed.

Congratulations to all organisers, especially Darwin-based colleagues, for your excellent efforts and results.

*Taisoo Kim Watsc*  
Manager  
Brighton City Library Service  
Victor

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