

secondly because I think the term sounds pretentious and even arrogant.

Of course we should all be encouraging younger members, but I for one do not think that the encouragement is all on the 'oldies' side. The young can be very inspiring and have often saved me from despair.

Surely the LAA would get more by encouraging donations to special causes, like a publications fund or a research fund, than by making a separate class of members whose only distinction is that they can afford to pay more.

It is neither praiseworthy nor noteworthy to have more spare money than one's colleagues, and certainly not newsworthy.

To change the subject — Are we sure that we understand what we mean when we say that we want to be hospitable to the information industry? There are some very broad definitions of that industry and I wonder how many of our professional statements will still exist if we succeed in our endeavours. Not, I suggest, Freedom to Read, or Free Library Service to All!

I am still sad that the object of the LAA that has profited me most, viz:— 'to promote the association . . . of persons engaged in or

interested in libraries and library services' has been dropped. Of course we join and meet because we believe in objects (i) and (ii), but we keep on meeting because we enjoy professional discourse and need the help and fellowship of our colleagues. The new (iii) is so clinical compared with the old (iii). I don't think that it is a very worthy object, or say anything important.

Finally to Hanns Possin — Can he please tell me who then are the doctors?

Jean P. Whyte

Mentor Membership . . . and other LAA matters

When I heard Mentor Membership mentioned in Darwin I really did not take it seriously, but now I must state my objections.

I do not see any connexion between being able to afford to pay a higher fee to the LAA and wanting to encourage younger members of the profession.

In fact, I would be very embarrassed to be listed as a Mentor — first because I would not want my higher subscription to be known (with its suggestion of a higher kudos) and

The importance of the front desk

I enclose a copy of a letter published recently in the AUSTRALIAN AUTHOR which is a devastating comment on our training of librarians.

We all know that the person at the front desk is often the least qualified to deal with the public but at the same time the public judge the library service by the attitudes and answers of this employee.

I feel strongly that all librarians responsible for the training of new staff or for managing any kind of library service are failing if they do not insist on:

RULE 1: When asked if you have anything but . . . or anything on . . . the answer must always be *Let us check the catalogue first.*

'Never heard of him!'

Lawrie Ryan was soooo right in his report in your March issue on the indifference of librarians towards Australian authors.

A few years ago I met a new resident who had moved into our suburb. In discussion he learned I was an author. A few days later he went to our local suburban library and asked one of the staff: 'Have you any books here by Patrick Tennison?'

She replied: 'Never heard of him.'

A look through the library's expensive computerised filing system revealed, however, that no fewer than five of my titles were on the library's shelves.

Come to think of it, perhaps it's not only Australian authors these book filers are indifferent to. Go beyond David Niven and their new found bonanza with Mills and Boon titles, and I suspect many of them know all too little about the stock they hand out by way of earning a living.

*Patrick Tennison
Ashburton Vic*

Nobody — no matter how experienced — should ever fall into the trap of saying, NO without first checking the catalogue.

Do library schools, I wonder, realise the importance of this? How many librarians-in-charge emphasise this to their staff?

From comments made to me by library users and from letters such as this, I very much doubt it.

Jean Michaelide

Positive librarians

I enjoy reading *InCite* — lots of interesting items and a light, breezy style.

However, I thought your 'positive' approach to the advert from the *Sun Herald* (*InCite* 1 July, p.6) was less than positive. I don't find positive to be cast in either the timid or sex-actress roles — the old saint/whore myth again. I'd find it positive for you to suggest to the community that they'll find assertive, strong, caring librarians in their local libraries. The concept of equality is an exciting one, too.

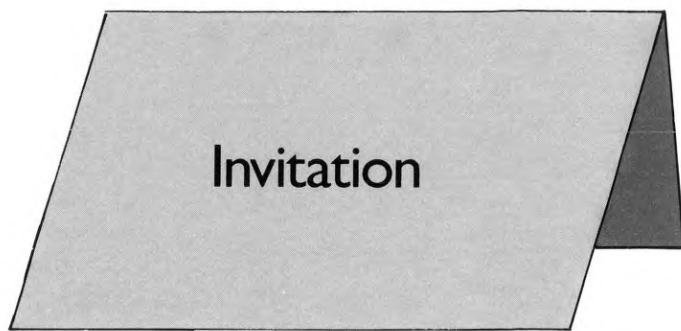
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On ALJ

The article by Jean Whyte 'Some thoughts on *The Australian Library Journal*,' in *InCite* Vol 15, No 14, came as a great shock to me. I guess I had been too busy being appalled at other recommendations in the report, that I had quite naccountably missed this one.

That the 'policy of the *ALJ* must be the furtherance of the objects of the Library Association of Australia . . .' is implied in its existence. As Jean Whyte states, the formal statement of its objects adopted in 1969 was very valid (but are they still being implemented?). Her remarks about the role of *InCite* with regard to functions 4,5,6 & 8 are very relevant. But her next statement ['Nevertheless the *ALJ* is the only general journal of librarianship published in this country. It is the most available avenue of publication for Australian librarians (and that is important) and together with *InCite*, it is the only thing that most members get for their subscriptions. Since the majority of members do not go to meetings, vote, or answer questionnaires, it is the only continuing education that the Association provides for them'] is the crux of the matter.

This is a very vital truism. To suggest that the *ALJ* be priced separately is unthinkable and unacceptable. I thoroughly agree with most points she has made except that *Orana* is cited in a similar way in its field (perhaps by researchers overseas more so than in Australia) and that certainly with younger members and certain groups, their Section Journal is seen as more relevant and therefore to be referred. This is no reason to suggest that *ALJ* be denied as a *right* to members. Where members have access to *ALJ* through their libraries or institutions (which they should do) when it can be appreciated that their personal reference is for a section journal.

Surely the role of the Association is to *serve* its members, not exploit them financially which seems, regrettably, to be an increasing trend over the last few years.

While it is true that many members do not read *ALJ* or see that it is relevant, it MUST BE MAINTAINED and as an integral part of the membership fee. Sure its coverage is not sufficiently wide and there may well be other criticisms, but let these be aired as Miss Whyte suggests. The library profession MUST have a national and international voice and a professional journal to promote and preserve items 2,3 & 4. It should be our leading research tool. What else have we to cover the whole spectrum of librarianship in this country?

Val Watson,
Editor *Orana*

The other side

I am sorry that Susan Robertson (*InCite* 15, 5 September 1986) did not receive the information I promised. I do not know what happened, but more is on its way.

Robertson's claim that creationist literature does not 'proselytize' is astonishing. The first article in the Creation Science Foundation's statement of faith stipulates that the 'scientific aspects of creation' are less important than religious proclamations. Ken Ham Director of Ministry (!) of the Foundation has described his work as 'a pre-evangelism,' 'ploughing,' 'sowing' ministry . . . When people come to Christ through this ministry, we ensure they become part of an evangelic church family (*Ex Nihilo*, 3,2,1980;23). Mr Ham's occupation is 'missionary'. Robertson's claim that creationists do not proselytize misrepresents their avowed aims.

The Australian Academy of Science (Ian Potter House, Edinburgh Avenue, Canberra 2600) has recently issued a very clear statement on creationism. I suggest that all librarians should obtain a copy of the considered view of our most illustrious scientific body. Unlike Robertson, the Academy does not consider creationism a viable scientific theory, though a place might be found in dogmatic or comparative religion courses.


Dr Martin Bridgstock

In brief

Australian Business, the *Australian Political Register* and *The Bulletin* are all now available as full text databases on Ausinet.

Newcastle Region Public Library has recently launched two new publications — *Retail Cooperatives in the Lower Hunter Valley* and *Fort Stretchley*. Details from C. E. Smith, Library Manager, PO Box 489, Newcastle 2300

Interface modular carpet tiles were selected by the Box Hill public library in Melbourne. In a very smooth changeover the existing carpet was removed and replaced in sections with Interface. Enquiries to C. M. Carrigan (02) 332 3088



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Project Intelligence Service is described by its marketers as a comprehensive 'early warning' about major development projects in Australia, covering such areas as the mining, chemical, oil and power industries. More information from Keith Hobson, Project Intelligence Service, 93 Barkers Road, Kew, 3101. Phone (03) 861 6115.

St James' *Annual Obituary*, mentioned in this column earlier this year, is available from Cambridge University Press, PO Box 85, Oakleigh, Vic 3166.

CSIRO AUSTRALIS now offers 15 databases to users. Find out more from CSIRO Central Information, PO Box 89, East Melbourne, Vic 3002. (03) 418 7333.

The Victorian Branch of the Children's Book Council will hold their AGM on 7 October at 7.30 pm at The Five Mile Press, 20 Liddiard Street, Hawthorn. Afterwards they will launch a 1987 Diary celebrating children's literature.

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP REVIEW

The Board of Education has proposed that the present policy on Associate (professional) membership be changed by introducing a currency component for new applicants and widening eligibility criteria.

The proposals have been circulated to Divisions and other interested parties for comment. They have been endorsed by the Corporate Plan and Review Committee, and General Council will be considering them at its meeting on 21 and 22 November. They are outlined in a discussion paper prepared by the Board — *Professional membership: a review of Association policy*. Copies of the paper are available from Sue Phillips at the LAA Office, phone (02) 692 9233 or (008) 22 1481.

Comments on the proposals should be forwarded to the Association by 21 October 1986.

THE DARWIN TAPES

Audiocassettes of the keynote and other main sessions at the Darwin Conference are now available at \$8 each, including postage and packaging.

Order forms are available from the LAA, and 'Darwin Institute of Technology Media Resources Centre, PO Box 40146, Casuarina NT 5792.

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