

REGIONAL GROUPS AND THE LAA

The LAA often receives letters from members in country areas who would like to play a greater role in the association but are prevented from doing so because of their geographical isolation.

One way in which the tyranny of distance can be overcome, at least as far as professional activities are concerned, is by the formation of regional groups of the LAA.

The LAA currently has 15 regional groups in various parts of the country. These groups play a vital role in bringing library staff in isolated areas together to discuss common professional concerns, to participate in continuing education activities or simply to socialise. The North Central Victoria Regional Group is one of the most recent to be established. Cathy Hunt, Secretary of the group has outlined the history of the group and some of its activities:

The North Central Victoria Regional Group was established in November 1984 out of an expressed need of several librarians in the region who felt isolated. Until then, local librarians' point of focus tended to be statewide interest groups peculiar to either the type of library in which they worked or the professional position they held. Examples of these are VATCL for TAFE librarians, SLAV for school librarians and ALCAE for CAE librarians. Naturally local members are still prominent in these interest groups.

However these interest groups do not reflect the reality of working away from a metropolitan centre. The librarians in the region rely heavily on each other for resource support and regardless of type of library in which they work, increasingly rely upon each other for professional support. It was recognition of this that motivated an

approach to the LAA to establish a regional group of the Association.

Activities undertaken since the inception of the group include talks by John Mills of the School of Librarianship, Riverina Institute of Higher Education on the library scene in the USA and Canada; Jennifer McLellan, Executive Director of the Australian Library Promotion Council on the need for publicising our wares; a joint dinner/meeting with the Ballarat Regional Group was held at which representatives from the Dept. of Agriculture and Information Express spoke on agricultural data bases. The group entered a float in the Bendigo Easter fair procession, an event which gained widespread publicity. A very successful progressive dinner which used different libraries for different courses was a useful way of making members aware of each others' libraries.

The group has also combined just recently with Arts Bendigo, a local organisation for promotion of the arts in arranging for three visiting writers (Walter Adamson, Mal Morgan and Maria Levitt) to speak at various venues in the area. This was very successful and worth repeating in the future.

Forthcoming events include a visit from James Thompson and our combined meeting/dinner with the Ballarat regional group.

Regional groups such as that in North Central Victoria, play a very active role in the LAA. If there is not a regional group in the country area near you, perhaps you might consider forming one. All that is needed is for 5 professional members and 5 other members of the LAA to send a statement to the General Secretary and the State Branch Secretary, setting out the reasons why a regional group is needed.

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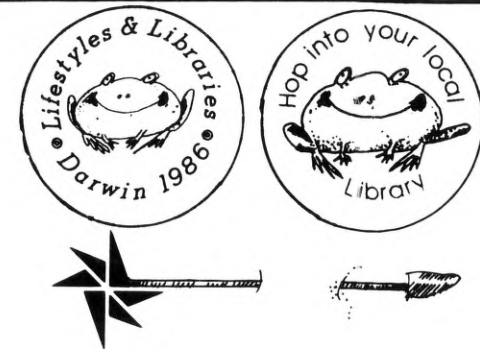
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