



**the
bottom
line**

Kerry Webb from the National Library started it. I was responding to invitations from Riverina, ACT and NSW Branches to visit to meet with the troops to discuss issues of future significance for our Association. Kerry gave me the topic 'Is there life after the Corporate Plan?', which I interpreted as a plea for a respite from navel-gazing.

His very brief brief was quite a challenge. The Head Office re-structure, phasing in the flat fees, the '87 Budget — all the immediate items were linked to the Corporate Plan.

Except NIP — National Information Policy. That issue we all have trouble embracing. Our chance to plead the case for the national library service. Thanks to Barry Jones, NIP was already on the political agenda, but in an 'all care no responsibility' way. Here was my topic — how best to move from the policy to the plan.

Our LAA already has a policy on NIP. And so too have our friends AACOBS, ALIC, the Department of Science and the National Library. But when the tumult and the shouting die, what will be left behind? Just how do we move from a policy position forward to a formally recognised national information system with libraries in the vanguard rather than in the guard's van?

I think we now need to show as well as tell. The policy discussion is fine for defining the

issues, but if we can go further with our contribution by identifying and drawing attention to example (exemplary?) libraries, then we might add substance to the debate. We can demonstrate that libraries are already the major component in the national information infrastructure and, by implication, that the implementation of the national information plan is not so daunting after all.

So in my recent travels I've been seeking comment on the following suggestion: that the Association, through its appropriate Sections, and with the co-operation of the people involved, comes up with a list of different types of libraries willing to become examples and inspection sites for policy makers and funders wishing to see what information planning is. The whole spectrum of libraries should be represented, and the list could include primary and secondary school, public, special, university and college, State and National libraries. Each participating library would make some aspect of its systems or services open for visits and some member of staff responsible for explaining how its activities were *already* part of the national information system. Together, all libraries on the list would display our capabilities and confirm our competence in handling the nation's most intangible asset — information.

The debate might even focus on how to use the component parts of the library network, rather than on whether to use them at all . . .

Want to be in it? Or do you have a better suggestion for moving this item off the agenda and into practice? All comments gratefully received — I don't know the half-life of a National Information Policy.

Ian McCallum
President

**Preservation
Project for Pascoe**

Irreplaceable newspaper records of NSW past will be preserved on microfilm due to \$278,000 State Bicentennial project launched on 8 October at the State Library by NSW Premier, Barrie Unsworth.

Microfilm copying of over 2½ million pages of NSW country and local newspapers will be the task of Australian photographic historian and Project Coordinator, Alan Davies.

Mr Davies explained that this invaluable record is crumbling away because of wood pulp paper used in newsprint from about the 1870s. Wood pulp paper begins to discolour after only a few years exposure to light and can be reduced to fragments in less than 10 years. Of course the great advantage of microfilm is its durability. With proper care microfilm should last 300 years.

Copies of local newspapers for communities throughout NSW will be made from master negative. For the first time, in many cases, towns will have access to their own history. The State Library of NSW with over 2,000 NSW newspaper titles in its care will provide many of the originals for copying. However Alan Davies is keen to track down those only copies of country newspaper stored in the back room of the local newspaper office or historical society. Microfilming for the entire project will be handled by V & F Pascoe Pty Ltd of Balgowlah.

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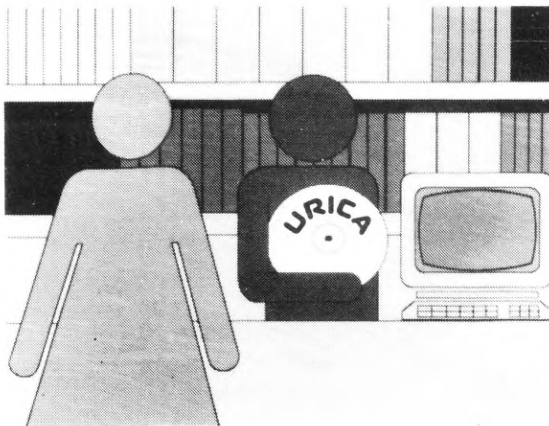
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