



Good sense

The policy of the University of New South Wales Library is to buy books from Australian library suppliers and, to a lesser extent, booksellers, where this can be done without disadvantage. It is clearly desirable to encourage the development of local enterprises and it is very convenient to have immediate and direct and inexpensive access to them.

Analysis has shown that for the samples concerned local suppliers were fairly competitive in terms of service, speed of delivery and price.

Convenience is also a major consideration and it is great to be able to pick up the 'phone and talk to our suppliers. And that applies not only to the Chiefs, but the Indians.

So this is one librarian who suggests that Bill Kelly is writing good sense in his letter 'Why Buy Australian' (*InCite*, 24 October, p.11 refers).

Allan Horton,
University Librarian

Professional wimps?

I cannot let Roy Stall's comments (*InCite* 24/10/86 7(18)p.1) pass without congratulating him for continuing to bring the issue of library promotion to our notice.

I concur fully with Roy when he says we should have a 'much more aggressive and much more professional' attitude towards promotion of what we can offer. Unless we do so we are in real danger in these times of economic rationalisation of being regarded as nonentities.

It all is a matter of perception. Information specialists (such as librarians) should regard themselves as being integral to any organisation in providing and disseminating vital information. Unfortunately, the organisations frequently do not see this, as Roy points out. No doubt the reasons are wide and diverse for this attitude, but bad PR and a poor self-image cannot help the cause of the information specialist.

To wit, Warren Horton at the 1984 LAA/NZLA Conference paraphrased Barry Jones in calling us 'wimps', and that we should lobby more effectively. One of the proposed aims of the Corporate Plan is heightened public awareness through better PR. To be fair, the LAA is lifting their game in this regard, but quietly as any reading of the national press would indicate. Roy's research supports this.

In 1984 my library science dissertation was on the subject of library services to the trade union as compared to library services to the business sector. Briefly, my research showed that while business did not use their libraries to any great extent, the trade unions did not see libraries as viable information sources except in the isolated instance. Discussions with people on both sides reaffirmed this perception. To quote one source, 'Libraries (and by inference librarians) aren't relevant, in our

game we need to know what happens now, not yesterday, last week or last month.' I did point out that on-line computer technology in the hands of a skilled professional alleviates the time factor. Also, that he should not disregard the past as it so often can affect the future, but he didn't want to know. It was his perception that librarians were more comfortable with the 'crinkle of Dickens' than providing a viable, up-to-date information service. Until we can change this common perception we will remain, at least in the eyes of the decision makers, irrelevant.

Yet change is possible, it is the resistance to change that is the threat. In this regard, librarians are their own worst enemy. To illustrate, in a discussion on this very subject of an aggressive promotion of our services, one of my lecturers at library school said 'You want a revolution which you won't get. We are a conservative profession — change will come, albeit slowly, but it will come. Out of small acorns, mighty oaks grow.' To which I

replied 'How long does it take to grow a oak?' My point then, as now, is that we do not have the time. It is admirable that the Corporate Plan recognises our deficiency in this area, but by the time it is implemented (if economic constraints will be forcing us to fight a rearguard action, instead of setting the pace.

In 1984 the membership of the LAA voted by the barest possible margin, not to re-locate the Executive to Canberra. Be that as I may but politicians react to pressure, so at least employ a professional PR firm to represent us and our interests in Canberra. Politicians awareness of what we are and what we represent must be heightened, and to do that we should be accessible.

More luck to you Roy in your efforts to heighten our awareness of this very real problem. Have you ever thought of moving to Canberra? The LAA could do with your lobbying potential.

Russ Elwin



LAA LIBRARY MANAGER OF THE YEAR

The Library Association of Australia is pleased to announce the establishment of the LAA Library Manager of the Year Award.

The award is sponsored by AWA Computer Services Pty. Ltd.

Aim

- To recognise and encourage good management practices within Australian libraries and information services.
- To encourage the development of an organisational climate within libraries and information services which promotes innovation and a better working relationship between managers and their staff.

Eligibility

The award of LAA Library Manager of the Year is open to any member of the Library Association of Australia responsible for the management of a library service, an individual library or information service, or a significant organisational unit within a larger library or information service.

The award is for management rather than supervision, and nominees should be able to demonstrate outstanding performance in planning, resource allocation and the organisation of staff. A nominee will be expected normally to be responsible for the direction of staff, including professional staff.

Nominations

Nominations must be proposed and seconded by two members of the staff of, or clients of, the organisation in which the nominee is employed, including at least one person within the library or unit which the nominee is responsible for managing.

Nominations should include:

- Name of nominee.
- Title of position held.
- Name and address of organisation.
- Number of staff whom the nominee is responsible for managing.
- Major achievements of the manager in the previous three years.
- Reasons why the nominee is regarded within his or her organisation as an outstanding manager.

Selection

The award will be administered by a sub-committee, consisting of one member of the LAA Board of Education, one member of General Council, and the Past President of the LAA.

Criteria which will be considered by the sub-committee in making a recommendation for the award include:

1. Demonstrable improvements in service delivered to the library or information services' clientele, as a result of decisions for which the manager is responsible, or through submissions made by the manager to higher funding/decision-making authorities.
2. Demonstrable improvements in working productivity obtained in the library or unit for which the manager is responsible.
3. Implementation of innovative approaches to services delivered, or to the organisation of work.
4. Improvement or establishment of successful relations between the service and its clientele, the manager and his/her staff, or between units in the service.
5. Examples of effective planning and implementation of new services or procedures.
6. Demonstrable improvements in decision-making procedures and/or communication (amongst staff or to/from users), in areas for which the manager is responsible.

Nomination forms are available from the Assistant Executive Director, Library Association of Australia, 376 Jones Street, Ultimo 2007. Nominations close on **1 June 1987**.