

# CORPORATE PLAN AND REVIEW

The Corporate Plan and Review Committee (Warren Horton, Anne Hazell and Jenny Adams) presented its report to General Council on Saturday, 15 February 1986 and a summary of the report and its recommendations is produced below.

The report was generally favourably received by the meeting and Council agreed to all its recommendations in principle. They are now calling for comment on the report and will consider this at the mid-year Council meeting to be held in Darwin on 27 and 28 June.

The report has been distributed in multiples to all divisions and committees of the LAA and is available to any interested party on request from Head Office. Requests may be made either in writing or by telephoning toll-free (008) 22 1481.

The deadline for comments is 1 May and these should be directed to the Executive Director.

## SUMMARY REPORT OF THE CORPORATE PLAN AND REVIEW COMMITTEE

The Corporate Plan and Review Committee was established by General Council at its August 1984 meeting.

The decision by General Council to establish the committee arose from various concurrent discussions about the role, management and future of the Association. These included a suggestion by John Brudenall early in 1984 that a corporate plan be developed, a considerable concern in the Council, the Executive and other forums about the declining numbers of younger librarians joining the Association, and concern about the ad hoc and short range decision making in financial and other areas. A circular to all divisions in April 1984 on the structure of the Association commented that 'various aspects of LAA organisation and operation continue to generate discussion and criticism. General Council has been concerned about the effectiveness of the Association for some time and has considered the need for a general review as an urgent priority in its objectives program.'

The Corporate Plan and Review Committee quickly recognised that, notwithstanding the terms of reference for the review, it was being seen by many not as a corporate planning exercise but as the opportunity to consider all aspects of the Association. These included its name, objects, potential membership, fee structure, activities, governance and management. This report inevitably reflects these widespread concerns and comments, which have been encouraged by the committee.

The committee followed a path of widespread consultation with the membership and others and made continued attempts to seek the views of on and lapsed members. The idea of discussion papers was rejected in the hope that people would not be constrained by the committee's ideas during the course of the review. In spite of this both the committee and the submissions at times concentrated on improving the existing situation rather than creating a new association.

It has been heartened by and is grateful for the many submissions made by individuals and divisions of the Association, and by the willingness of people to attend the hearings which were held in all capital cities and various regional centres. The committee was particularly grateful to the ACT Branch for its forbearance in agreeing to an early hearing in the ACT, which enabled the validity of the process to be assessed.

The committee has given due weight to the written and oral submissions it has received and the results of the questionnaire, but is of course responsible for the comments and recommendations in this report. It has been very conscious that the review needed to concentrate on issues of principle, and the comments reflect this. While aware that the June 1986 General Council meeting is to consider the report and comments on it from Association bodies and members, the committee is hopeful that much preparatory work can be done beforehand towards the implementation of many recommendations.

## THE FUTURE DIRECTION OF THE LAA

The LAA is the largest organisation in the information area and as such has a responsibility to take the lead in the field.

The Association must become an initiator. Manufacturing companies do not wait for consumers to notify them of the need for a new product. They constantly reassess their existing and potential markets, look for holes in the market place which might be filled by a new product, and delete unnecessary lines. They also go a step further and convince the market that it needs the newly developed product.

While the Association is not a manufacturing but a service organisation, many of the same principles may be applied. The Association must continually re-evaluate its range of services. It must look not only at satisfying existing members' needs but must also consider new services to attract and satisfy potential members.

A similar philosophy must apply to lobbying. It is obviously necessary to respond to government initiatives and changes in policy and this must be continued. What the Association has not done is to herald its successes in this area to the world. While the LAA's lobbying successes have been substantial, e.g. in areas such as sales tax on books, copyright, FOI to name a few, it has failed to make this known, particularly to the media and to the general public.

To remain the largest and most vital organisation in the information area the Association must become more dynamic and this must happen now. With the current changes in the information industry there is also a cross disciplinary shake-up occurring. This will continue for the next 5-10 years but the Association must act now to attract its share of the information profession. This does not mean ignoring the needs of library personnel but the plain fact is that the role and nature of traditional library work has undergone enormous change. There are also increasing numbers of librarians moving into other than traditional library jobs. The Association must cater for all these needs and is in a good position to do so.

By providing the information and services required by the new information professional the membership of the Association will define itself but it is important that the Association market itself so that these people are aware of its existence. Greater contact with other bodies, not necessarily information related, in the form of joint meetings and papers in their journals is essential. The use of a public relations consultant

will also assist in spreading the message.

There is evidence that the profession does not, at present, hold itself in high esteem. The Association must take the lead in encouraging professional pride and the importance of LAA membership for professional advancement must be maximised. This can be done by ensuring that senior members of the profession are members and that they encourage their staff not only to be members but also to be actively involved in the Association. In the American Library Association many senior staff do not take up positions as office bearers but encourage and make their staff available to assume such positions.

In Australia some of the more junior members of the Association feel that their employers do not want them to become actively involved in LAA activities and, rightly or wrongly, the committees of the Association are regarded as being exclusive and club-like. People attending meetings often feel on the outer and say they are not made to feel welcome at meetings. The Association, including all the divisions, must make a greater effort to make new members feel welcome, when they join the Association and when they attend meetings, e.g. all new members should receive a letter of welcome on joining the Association and divisions should follow this up with some form of personal contact. A mentor approach where new members are contacted and invited to attend a meeting, to which they are personally accompanied, seems to be an ideal way of welcoming new members. Divisions should be notified to new members on a regular basis to allow this to happen.

Membership of and involvement in the Association must be regarded as professional development and this must be emphasised at every opportunity.

## Finances

For the Association to change to a more dynamic body there must, as well as a major change in philosophy, be a change in attitude to the finances of the Association.

It is inevitable that in the coming years the Association will continue to rely heavily on membership subscriptions for its major source of income. The Association must look at other areas of income and members must expect to pay (at an appropriate member rate in each case) for extra services. The Association must ruthlessly examine its programs for expenditure against likely income and action priorities.

The Association must look closely at what it is spending its money on. For example, large amounts of money are being spent on travel and some of this could be reduced by using teleconferencing and other electronic transfers, such as electronic mail. This money could then be used for membership services and programs put forward by the LAA committees.

The future will be challenging and exciting, fulfilling the professional development of the information professional and representing the profession at the broadest possible level. It will see a dramatic restructuring of the Association's finances and a greater emphasis on priorities and the involvement of the membership-at-large.

## Recommendations:

1. *Make appropriate arrangements for the employment of professional lobbying expertise to represent the Association in key programs requiring access to Commonwealth Government politicians and bureaucrats, and to assist in the preparation of the necessary material.*

2. As a matter of urgency investigate the employment of a PR officer and/or the contracting of a PR company to work on building up the Association's corporate image and improve political clout.
3. Introduce new services to members concentrating on the information manager and the new technology.
4. Improve communication with existing and potential membership to prove the value of belonging to the Association.
5. Take a more entrepreneurial attitude towards the Association's finances and set targets, for the coming year, for the percentage of income to be sought from areas other than membership fees.

## NAME AND OBJECTS OF THE ASSOCIATION

The committee considered four alternative scenarios for the future:

- (a) that the LAA become a trade union;
- (b) the Association continue as at present, with the same title and objectives;
- (c) the Association become 'the information association' embracing all workers in the information industry;
- (d) to continue as an association which broadens its scope to be hospitable to a wider range of library and information workers.

Option (d) was the thrust of the Futures Committee recommendations and is also being put forward by the Corporate Plan and Review Committee.

### Recommendations:

6. That the Association decide in principle to change its name from the Library Association of Australia to the Library and Information Services Association of Australia (LISAA).
7. That the Association redefine its working objectives as —
  - (i) to promote and improve library and information services in the best interests of the community which they serve;
  - (ii) to improve the status of librarians and other information service professionals;
  - (iii) to continue to encourage the involvement in the Association of people working or interested in library and information services.

## STRUCTURE

The committee believes it is desirable that the Association continues to be a national association with State and Territory branches. It should not become a confederation of State and Territory associations. A strong central body is needed to speak for all library and related information workers and this is better achieved by a national association than by a confederation. Moreover, many functions are more efficiently handled at a national level. We also have considerable doubts whether it is realistic to consider a dismantling of the present centralised association into a decentralised association based on strong State organisations in a loose confederacy.

The committee believes that the governing body of the Association should continue to be the General Council, but has recommended a number of changes to both the composition and role of Council and the Executive Committee.

## Composition of Council

The committee considered a range of options for the composition of Council.

These included:

- (a) The status quo.
- (b) Sectional instead of State representation.
- (c) Sectional and State representation.
- (d) Two representatives from each State.

- (e) Institutional representation.
- (f) Regional Group representation.

The committee has recommended that membership of Council be revised to include an institutional representative, elected by institutional members, and an extra position of General Councillor-at-large, bringing the total number to three. General Councillors-at-large should be seen as 'open' positions to which members might aspire to be elected running on a particular platform or representing a particular Section. Voting would be on a preferential or proportionate system.

The committee has also recommended that the positions of General Secretary and General Treasurer be abolished and that two Councillors be elected to the Executive each year. This would increase the effectiveness of the Executive Committee and also obviate the criticism of recent years that the Executive does not consult with General Council.

## The role of General Council

At present Council is inundated with paper and rarely makes major decisions without first circulating papers for comments to all divisions. The Council should be considering only a few major policy papers at each meeting and should only seek division comment on the most major matters.

The committee feels that the Council should hold fewer meetings each year and that these should be decision making meetings. Papers for meetings must be properly ordered and include background information and previous decisions on each issue.

### Recommendations:

8. All State General Councillors be elected for a two year term, with half elected each calendar year to ensure continuity.
9. The Council be expanded to include one institutional representative starting from 1987.
10. There be a total of three General Councillors-at-large with a changed role, one to be elected to take office in 1987 and two in 1988.
11. The positions of General Secretary and General Treasurer be abolished at the end of 1987 and 1986 respectively.
12. Two General Councillors be elected to the Executive Committee each year by Council, for a one year term.
13. Council meet twice yearly for three days, rather than thrice yearly for two days as at present.
14. The operations of the General Council, the ultimate policy making body of the Association, be clarified and redefined to reflect that role.

## Roles of the President and Executive Director

The roles of the President and Executive Director were considered by the committee and it has been suggested that the Executive Director's position should be strengthened to give the opportunity for a more dynamic role in the affairs of the Association. This would not diminish the role of President but would give the President the opportunity to set directions for the Association and to implement their own electoral manifestos. It will hopefully also open the position of President and allow a broader range of candidates to contest the position.

### Recommendations:

15. The management of the Association be delegated to the Executive Director, with regular management and financial reports to Council and the Executive.
16. The position of Executive Director be strengthened, particularly in the areas of policy development, and public representation of the Association.

## Branches and Regional Groups

### Recommendations:

17. Regional Groups be funded directly from Head Office for 80% of their per capita grant with 20% paid direct to the Branch.
18. The system of special grants should be reviewed and divisions and LAA committees should be encouraged to apply for money for special projects. Grants to be applied for two or three times a year, and directed to the most appropriate body for advice to General Council, e.g. Publications Board, CE Committee, etc.

## Sections and Special Interest Groups

The committee has recommended the abolition of national Sections and Special Interest Groups as they currently operate as it was considered that their primary function is to provide activity at the local level.

The proliferation of Sections and Special Interest Groups was regarded as positive rather than negative but divisions should be disbanded when they are no longer of interest.

### Recommendations:

19. Revise the By-laws and Regulations to tighten the procedure for formation of divisions and to include Special Interest Groups.
20. Abolish national Sections and national Special Interest Groups.
21. Give Sectional Groups and Special Interest Groups the opportunity to form national committees should they wish.

## The Association's own information mechanism

### Recommendation:

22. The archives of the Association and the business papers of meetings be so organised as to encourage efficient decision making and administration of the Association.

## FUNCTIONS OF THE ASSOCIATION

The committee commented on various functions of the Association and made comments on issues such as the running of Head Office and the services issuing from it, the committees of the LAA and the Association's relationship with other bodies.

### Recommendations:

23. The Executive Director review the duties and responsibilities of the LAA office staff by December 1986 with any changes to be made in 1987.
24. The Association initiate a publicity program and range of products for sale at conferences.

## Location of the LAA Head Office and local presence

The committee widely canvassed the proposal to move the Association to Canberra but has rejected the idea for a number of reasons. These include that lobbying can be effectively done with paid expertise as well as not being the only reason for deciding the location of Head Office. Other factors such as extra travel time for office bearers and limited support for the move were also taken into consideration.

The committee feels that the Association needs a far greater local presence in all States of Australia to look after members' needs and gain more local publicity. The person would work on a part-time basis and concentrate particularly on areas such as recruitment and publicity.

**Recommendation:**

- The Association employ one person in each State (with the exception of New South Wales) on a part-time basis to establish a local presence.

**AA committees**

The LAA is a heavily committee-based organisation and at present has 20 committees. This is both desirable and necessary but the Association must be careful that its committees are effective and relevant. They should be reviewed annually and each committee should have a member of General Council on it to ensure efficient communication.

**Recommendations:**

- All committees be required to draw up an annual work plan and report on this annually.
- Every committee to have a member of General Council on it.
- Committee travel costs be substantially reduced, e.g. new committees be established where possible on a local basis, with members from other areas meeting via teleconference.

**Publications Board**

The publications program must expand and become more profitable and it would be advantageous for the Board to include a member with in-depth knowledge of the publishing industry.

**Recommendations:**

- The Publications Board expand its program over the next five years, setting profit targets for each year.
- The Publications Board be expanded to include a member with an in-depth knowledge of the publishing industry.

**Board of Education**

The committee initially anticipated making major detailed comments on the role of the Board of Education, but the Board has itself in the last twelve months conducted a quite fundamental questioning and reconsideration of its role. The committee is in broad agreement with the Board's conclusions, especially in its moving towards a wider entry for professional membership along the lines of the two recommendations of the Board's discussion paper **Professional membership: A review of Association policy** (November 1984).

Considerable comment was received on the need for the Board to increase communication about its activities and to explore the full possibility of conjoint assessments.

**Recommendation:**

- The Board of Education embark on a publicity program to inform the membership of its activities.

**Continuing education**

The current tendering system for CE is successful but does not allow the Association to take advantage of courses which become available throughout the year. Nor does it give the Association a CE clearinghouse and yet there is a clear demand for more CE to be made available.

**Recommendations:**

- Continue the current tender system for CE courses.
- Employ a Continuing Education Officer to
  - co-ordinate the tender system
  - organise courses of a topical nature on demand
  - organise overseas visitors' schedules
  - organise the production and distribution of CE courses in new technology formats, e.g. video, teleconference, etc.

- provide a CE clearinghouse for divisions
- act as conference liaison for LAA conferences.

**Nominating Committee**

The present Nominating Committee system is a corruption of democracy and should be revised so that it is only activated where no nominations are received.

**Recommendation:**

- The role of the Nominating Committee be revised.

**International Relations Committee****Recommendation:**

- The Association draw up an international relations plan and strengthen its involvement in IFLA.

**The LAA's relationship with other bodies**

The Association is interested in the opportunity to be hospitable to other associations and it would be desirable to look at whether some sort of affiliate membership can be developed, particularly with bodies such as ASLA.

There is also concern that bodies such as AACOBS and the LAA duplicate effort and that the size of the profession in Australia does not have the resources to stretch across the two organisations.

**Recommendations:**

- That the principle of affiliate membership be explored with ASLA and other appropriate bodies, on the basis of a lower fee giving some entitlement to particular LAA services and opportunities to members of such organisations.
- Initiate discussions with AACOBS to investigate ways in which the two associations might work more effectively.

**MEMBERSHIP & FEES**

The majority of people graduating from librarian or library technician courses in Australia do not join the Association while studying or upon leaving educational institutions and entering the workforce. Most of those who do join as students or within the first year of employment again leave within three years. This problem is the most critical facing the Association. Not only the financial health but also the political and professional viability of the Association depend upon its being truly representative of the profession in this country. If a benchmark is its ability to attract the majority of the younger profession as members then the Association has failed.

The Review Committee sees the fee question as a key issue in the healthy future of the Association. Whatever else is done, including developing services which match expectations over the word 'relevance', it is essential that the fee structure adopted by the Association be one acceptable to the broad range of members and potential members. While the Association could mount a major recruitment and retention campaign based on the argument that the services provided for this fee are misunderstood, that the fee is usually quite defensible compared to other association fees, or that the fee is, in any case, tax deductible, such arguments are doomed before they are made. The fee structure must be drastically altered, seen to be more equitable and, in general terms, contained.

By its own action in the last two years the Association has indicated its concern over fees.

In August 1984 General Council lowered all personal fees for 1985 by 5% and has already decided that 1986 fees will remain at present levels. It is unusual for any professional association to have held fees for the last three years, let alone lowering them. These actions indicate the Association's acceptance of the argument that fees are generally perceived to be too high. The Association must now introduce a long term strategy to implement a more acceptable fee level, and this involves abandoning the fee structure geared to income. It has been noted that there has been little reduction in the Association's programs during this time and this has been achieved by more efficient financial management and increased recruitment.

The committee recommends that the Association should revert to four broad membership categories:

- Professional members.
- Personal members other than professional members.
- Institutional members.
- Student members.

It would then recommend the eventual introduction of a flat fee for members in categories 1 and 2, with the retention of a differential fee on the present system for institutional membership.

In adopting a flat fee for membership, it is also recommended that the Association should, as a principle, adopt the basis of adding packages to individual subscriptions, including the right to subscribe to the *Australian Library Journal* and section journals, and membership of Sections and Special Interest Groups. It is believed that all journal publications of the Association should be self-supporting either through subscriptions or advertising. (At this time *InCite* is largely self-supporting through advertising.)

Many people expressed the opinion that an increase in the differential between members' and non-members' rates at continuing education activities and conferences would act as a stimulus in recruitment. The committee therefore recommends that the differential between members' and non-members' rates at continuing education activities and conferences be 50%.

What these basic membership fees would be is a matter for General Council's decision, but the committee would recommend serious consideration of fees (1985 value) of \$110 for professional membership and \$80 for personal members other than professional members. The \$80 figure has been arrived at after a consideration of the relevant benefits of professional membership as opposed to other forms of membership, and of the present fees. The committee realises that some, including professional and other members in part-time work, would pay a significantly increased fee but does not believe that the Association can continue to heavily subsidise the membership fees of some broad categories by the present high fees in other categories.

The financial implications of these recommendations depend upon subjective judgements like the effect upon the Association's membership, the weight to be given to the constant complaints about the fees being too high, the likely broadening of the membership base, and indeed the question of whether the Association has in any case the will to contain its own costs. Using the membership figures of 15 July 1985, on a 'worst case' scenario which assumes that all then unfinancial members eventually leave the Association and a gross departure among present members it could be argued that likely membership income would fall from the 1985 budgeted estimate of \$615,000 to c.\$470,000. *The committee does not believe that*

this will happen, but in the interests of the Association's prudent financial management are recommending that the philosophical change be introduced over a period of three financial years. In other words, the proposed change to the two flat fee rates, widely announced and allied to a major membership drive as the Association's highest priority, would be introduced over three financial years.

The committee gave very careful consideration to the question of student membership. The longterm vitality and life blood of the Association depends upon capturing students' interests in the Association, and the Association should take several steps to encourage student interest and involvement in its affairs and activities while they are being educated, but on the assumption that they will still not necessarily join until in receipt of an income. This would include continuing the present policy of allowing students to participate even if not members in Association activities, but also the distribution of *InCite* through library schools to all students in library technician and professional courses in the country. This could be done with relatively little cost if the distribution was done on a bulk basis with the co-operation of the heads of the various library schools.

To encourage new graduates to retain their membership of the Association or to join the LAA should follow the lead of the American Library Association by phasing in full membership rates over the first three years after graduation during which time people may still be seeking employment or being paid at the lower salary levels.

*Recommendations:*

38. That the Association should, as a principle,

adopt the basis of adding packages to individual subscriptions which continue to include the services listed above.

- 39. The differential between members' and non-members' rates at continuing education activities and conferences be 50%.
- 40. That the LAA's financial year be moved to July-June, with subscriptions then payable in the month May-June next to the taxation year.
- 41. That there be two broad 'flat fee' membership rates, one for professional members and the other for all other individual members of the Association apart from students.
- 42. That
  - (a) students receive members' rates for continuing educational activities, conferences and publications,
  - (b) students have access to Branch, Regional and Sectional Group and Special Interest Group meetings,
  - (c) through bulk posting to the schools of librarianship, students receive a personal letter of welcome to the profession at the beginning of their course and a congratulatory letter at the end, and,
  - (d) the present student membership category be continued.
- 43. That the two new 'flat fee' membership rates be phased in over three financial years, to cushion the effect of the changes upon members' subscriptions and the Association's finances.
- 44. That the decision to do this be widely publicised, and that a major recruitment drive as the Association's highest priority be mounted at the same time (this would include letters to all lapsed members, publicity through library schools and the involve-

ment of all Branches in the recruitment drive).

- 45. That *InCite* be distributed to all students in library technician and professional courses in the country, by bulk distribution arrangements with the library schools.
- 46. That the institutional membership category as at present defined be retained.
- 47. That new graduates receive discounted membership rates during the first three years of their professional life.

**THE ROYAL CHARTER**

Central to the committee's deliberations was the question of the Royal Charter and the capacity to effect the changes recommended in the report.

Only a minority of members commented on the Charter and the view of some that it is an impediment to acceptance of the Association was balanced by the equally strong view of others of its importance.

If the Association is serious about implementing the recommendations of the report there must be serious consideration as to whether it is more sensible to seek release from the Charter rather than attempting to seek a supplemental Royal Charter.

*Recommendation:*

- 48. That the Association, if it adopts the proposals elsewhere in this report for a change of name and significant governance and structural changes, take advice from our solicitors as to whether this can be easily effected under the Royal Charter or whether it would be more sensible to now seek release from the Charter.

**Join the LAA!**

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**6863 members can't be wrong**



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Library Association of Australia  
376 Jones Street  
Ultimo NSW 2007  
Phone: 692 9233**



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