— the bottom line

By now you've probably read the book and can't wait for the movie; but what's it all about, this report of the Corporate Plan and Review Committee?

I think it means more than a name change, a different fee structure and a revised organisation chart. I think it's about the *purpose* of our Association.

Way back in 1963 the purpose was defined in the LAA's objects:

(a) to promote, establish and improve libraries and library services;

(b) to improve the standard of librarianship and the status of the library profession;

(c) to promote the association for the foregoing objects of persons engaged or interested in libraries or library services.

Our predecessors obviously thought this was a reasonable stab at the reasons for having an Association — they embodied the objects in the Royal Charter which is a major component of our Constitution. And I agree. The objects do explain what we're aiming at, imply that there is always room for improvement, and leave the ends nicely open-ended.

Now the CPRC has turned its collective hand to redefinition:

(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.

As you can see, 'information services' and 'information service professionals' have been added to denote an enlarged constituency and to me this seems appropriate. Our members and potential members may be working in the information field but not in libraries. And it does seem that 'library' has the connotation 'books' rather than 'information centre' or some related expression. Yet we've not been altogether unsuccessful in demonstrating to those who fund and observe us that libraries are involved in much more than books. I like 'library'. To me it captures our origins and connotes our future, but I readily concede that 'information service' is likely to be more attractive to funders. It's no big deal really. We know that libraries provide information services and that many special libraries do so without books, but we need to be aware of how others see us. Once we have their attention we can hit 'em with the objects.

How about these:

(a) to promote, establish and improve information services from libraries and other information centres;

(b) to monitor and improve standards for information professionals;

(c) to provide opportunities through association for people wishing to contribute to the foregoing objects.

(a) covers the institutional aspects, emphasising our service orientation; (b) deals with the professional's desire to improve performance; and (c) acknowledges our human side — our proclivity to meet to discuss common concerns (and the pleasure we derive from each other's company).

Don't like them? Have a go at your own. But try not to take another 23 years before reflecting on why we have an Association. The deadline for comments to be considered by General Council is the end of April.

Ian McCallum
Presiden

HAPPENINGS: Notices for Happenings should be sent to the Assistant Publications Officer by the correct closing date. Notices are then retained on file until the due date, so a second 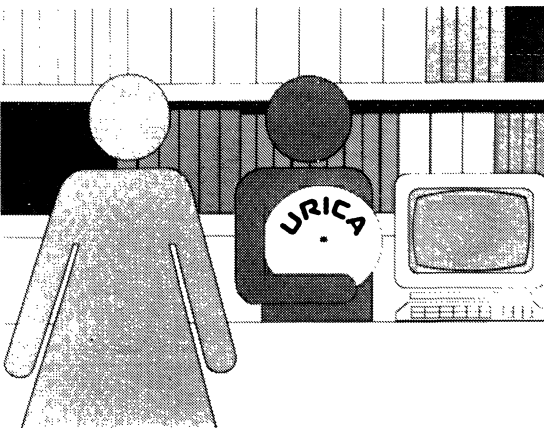notice is unnecessary unless there has been a change.