PUBLICATIONS BOARD REPORT

The Publications Board of the LAA held its first meeting for the year on 9 February.

Neil Radford was re-elected as Chairman and other members of the Board are Jenny Adams, Judith Baskin, Martha Heeren, David Jones, Brenda Pittard, Janet Robinson, Frank Thompson and Patricia Ward.

Progress reports were received on the titles in various stages of production. Barbara Brady has undertaken to compile the *Guide to Australian Reference Books — Social Sciences*, the second in the series begun by Wilma Radford's *Humanities. The Directory of Australian Directories* compiled by Ralph Reid is ahead of schedule and discussions are in progress to produce this jointly with the Information Australia Group.

Harrison Bryan has been working on two projects for the Association. His *Pattern of Library Services* is going through the design and editing process and a July publication date seems likely. The major project, with a working title of *Encyclopedia of Australian Library and Information Science* is to be produced in four volumes with copy for Volume One to be edited and ready for design by the end of May.

Finding and Keeping, which is the title for the Proceedings of the Audio Visual Conference is an unusual book, greatly enhanced by the inclusion of many rare photographs and unusual illustrations and is with the designer.

The possibility of advertising in *The Directory of Suppliers used by Australian Libraries* had been very well received by suppliers, with many bookings from overseas suppliers. The work involved in designing their advertisements had delayed the project slightly but it was almost ready for the printer.

There had been delays too with *Libraries and Lifestyles,* partly because of its size — more than 1000 pages. At the time of the meeting a February completion date seemed likely but as this report is being written the book is waiting in a queue at one of Sydney's very few binderies.
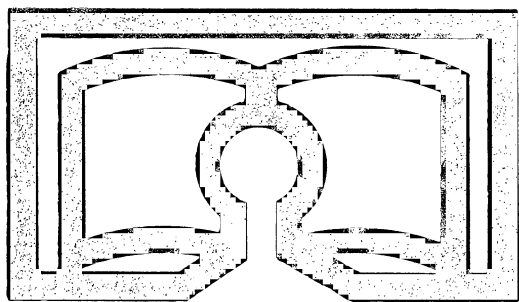
Work is underway on manuscripts for *Researchers Guide to Audio Visual Resources in Australia.*

New publications tabled at the meeting were *Ausloan 2* and *Special Libraries in Queensland 1986 — a directory.*

A seminar on the use of permanent paper is being planned, with the purpose of raising the awareness of people in the printing, publishing and paper making industries.

The next meeting of the Board will be on 22 June.

Brenda Pittard
Publications Consultant

BOOK REVIEW

A trek into our professional universe

Information enterprises in Australia: a first profile. Mairéad Browne. School of Library and Information Studies, Kuring-gai College of Advanced Education. 1985. 136 pp. ISBN O 909177 52 X.

Two years ago one of my students who lived in a remote country settlement spent long hours on tedious train trips to and from home. Passengers invariably asked her where she was from, but none had ever heard of the place. Just as often this question was followed by another: 'What do you do?' She became so irritated by these questions that she took to answering: 'I'm studying to be an information professional'. Apparently this obfuscation always had the desired effect: the enquirer was permanently silenced.

Librarians world-wide are in the throes of searching their souls to discover who they are professionally, and how they fit into the wider world of computers, commercial and government enterprise, new marketing devices, and straitened budgets. Likewise, library educators grapple with the meaning and relevance of 'the post-industrial society', with justifying their role to course funders and potential, job-hungry students, and with viewing an increasingly obese body of printed matter on 'non-traditional' information providers.

Mairéad Browne aims to penetrate some of the excess fat, partly by not actually placing her study in the context of some of the broad professional concerns mentioned above. She does acknowledge, however, the value of the work of others who have gone before (like Anthony Debons, Barry Jones, the Information Management and Consulting Group, and Cherryl Schauder). The immediate, practical purpose of this 'profile' is explained elsewhere (Mairéad Browne, 'Defining a framework for a course for information professionals or, the search for the philosopher's stone', in *The Australian Library Journal,* August 1986, p. 114).

Her work is a 'first profile' in the sense that she is tentative about the extent of the applicability of her research findings, rather than believing that she is breaking entirely new ground. By her own admission, she bites off more than she can chew: she attempts initially to categorise information organisations in 'the private sector', to describe their unique features, and to create a model of the transfer of their information.

She defines an 'information enterprise' as one organising or obtaining information for members of the public or organisations on a regular basis for profit. Her own reasons for not fulfilling her aims are explained, but to me additional difficulties arise from her failure to recognise the similarity of the chosen 'enterprises' and all sorts of information providers, and the basic correspondence between her own model of information transfer and most other models of the communication of information.

Interesting problems remain unresolved: how do information professionals cope with change within and without their sphere of influence; what is the point of trying to distinguish sharply between segments of the information 'industry'; and can we ever hope to describe adequately the 'hidden college', the ubiquitous, informal process of information transfer?

Mairéad Browne deserves full credit for being aware of the difficulties involved in a project like hers, and for calling for more formal links between the many existing information organisations. She has demonstrated that there are as many types of information enterprise as there are information needs or types of information.

To those of us who enjoy exploring some boundaries of our professional universe, who are not content with well-worn routes or predictable fellow-travellers, she has provided a prototype vehicle.

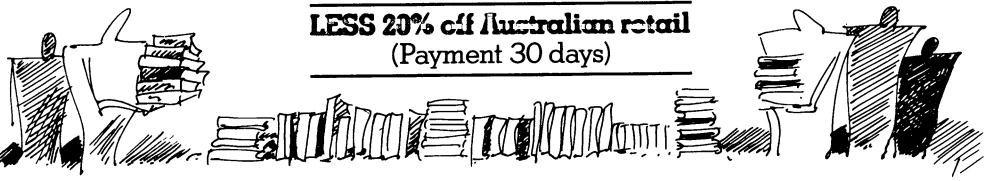*Graeme Johanson,*
Department of Information Services,
RMIT